

The HOUSE DIVIDED

THE STORY OF LINCOLN AND THE CIVIL WAR

HARVEY HOLMAN

The House Divided

*The Story of Lincoln and the
Civil War*

By HARVEY HOLMAN

The House Divided is a fascinating, smoothly written, sympathetic account of a great man and the times that tried his soul and developed his character. With minimum recourse to footnotes, this book interweaves the more interesting events of Lincoln's life, the more salient points of the anti-slavery agitation, and the most exciting phases of the Civil War into a unified, very readable account. The author's aim in writing this book is to show those events of the nineteenth century in the light of what we know today—to point up the tragedy that in spite of Lincoln's courage and leadership, in spite of a Union victory in the war, the issues for which the Civil War was fought are still very much alive today, still making this country a "house divided."

Mr. Holman not only understands the historical facts that surrounded Abraham Lincoln, but he has captured and conveyed the *spirit* of those troubled and critical years. Students of Lincolniana and the Civil War will find many new details of the great

(continued on back flap)

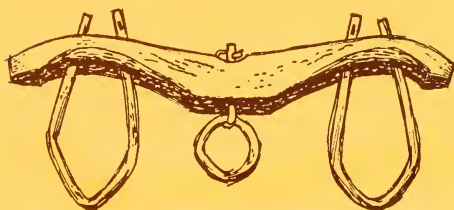
HARVEY HOLMAN

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Lincoln Room

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THE HOUSE DIVIDED

THE HOUSE . . .

"If we could first know where we are, and whither we are tending, we could better judge what to do, and how to do it. . . . A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved; I do not expect the house to fall; but I do expect that it will cease to be divided."

—ABRAHAM LINCOLN (1858)

. . . DIVIDED

"The position Lincoln has taken on this question not only presents him as claiming for them the right to vote, but their right under the divine law and the Declaration of Independence to be elected to office, to become governors or United States Senators, or Judges of the Supreme Court. . . . He would permit them to marry, would he not? And if he gives them that right I suppose he will let them marry whom they please, provided that they marry their equals. If the divine law declares that the white man is the equal of a negro woman, that they are on perfect equality, I suppose he admits the right of a negro woman to marry the white man. . . . I do not believe that the signers of the Declaration had any reference to negroes when they used the expression that all men are created equal. . . . They were speaking only of the white race."—STEPHEN DOUGLAS

CHAPTER I

LINCOLN'S CHILDHOOD

IN SCHOOL DAYS

"I'm sorry that I spelt the word:
I hate to go above you,
Because"—the brown eyes lower fell—
"Because, you see, I love you!"

He lives to learn, in life's hard school,
How few who pass above him
Lament their triumph and his loss,
Like her—because they love him.

—JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

IN A ONE-ROOM log cabin in Hardin County, Kentucky, on February 12, 1809, a baby was born to a typical family of Kentucky pioneers. And although the wretched log shelter with a single door and window, a chimney made of clay and sticks, and an earthen floor was the typical dwelling of the western frontiersmen of the time, the baby at least was something special. For they named him Abraham Lincoln, and he became the sixteenth President of the United States. And humble as his birthplace was, he would be neither the first nor the last president to be born in a log cabin.

When Abraham was four years old, the family moved to another farm in Kentucky, about ten miles distant. Life in the Kentucky wilderness was harsh and severe. When game was plentiful, the family ate freely of grouse, turkey, bear, and deer. When it was scarce the family board consisted mainly of corn meal and potatoes.

The members of the Lincoln household toiled long and hard from dawn until sunset. Even little Abe had his regular chores to perform each day—carrying water, filling the wood box, picking wild berries and grapes, and riding the horse when his father plowed.

When he was five he trudged off to school in the company of his older sister Sarah, to learn the alphabet and reading and writing, making the four-mile trek on foot to a “blab” school, so called because the children learned their lessons by repeating them at the top of their voices.

The frontier “blab” schools, such as the one Lincoln attended, were sometimes also called “subscription” schools, because the parents of each pupil paid tuition in the form of farm produce. Sometimes the produce took the form of hams, corn meal, or even animal skins.

The school building itself was usually a log cabin, erected by neighboring settlers for that specific purpose. The pupils sat on split-log benches, warmed by a fireplace in the front of the room which nearly scorched the britches of the teacher and the front-row students, while students unfortunate enough to be too far to the rear held their pens in half-frozen fingers.

Throughout his entire life, Lincoln regretted his lack of formal schooling. But he tried to make the most of his limited opportunity. A fellow student later reported that Abe was always at school early, always at the head of his class, and was easily the best speller in his school. The same informant reported that he had once in a spell-down helped a girl spell *d-e-f-i-e-d* by quietly pointing to his eye when she hesitated after the letter *f*.*

The genius for fashioning words that spoke from the heart in clear, direct language, which was to characterize him in later years and be capped by the *Gettysburg Address*, one of the three great orations of American history, was not in evidence in his earliest school compositions. But he soon turned to poetry as a means of self-expression and was early scrawling such perishable verse as the following:

* Sterling North, *Abe Lincoln: Log Cabin to White House* (New York: Random House).

Abraham Lincoln,
His hand and pen.
He will be good but
God knows when.

Unfortunately for posterity this was followed by:

Time What an emty vapor tis
and days how swift they are
swift as an indian arrow
fly on like a shooting star
the presant moment Just, is here
then slides away in haste
that we can never say they're ours
but only say they're past.*

In the autumn of 1816, the Lincoln family moved again, this time to a tract of forest located in Spencer County, Indiana. Lincoln, once while in a nostalgic mood, is reported to have said that his own early family life resembled that of a family he once knew who were so much on the move that their chickens would lie on their backs and cross their legs, ready to be tied, whenever they saw the wagon brought out. Two years later, Abraham's mother, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, died of "milk sickness." (This disease is contracted by animals that have eaten poisonous plants and is transmitted to humans who eat the flesh or dairy products of the infected animals.)

She died when little Abe was only ten years of age, but she had already woven her own finest traits into the fabric of the future President's character. When Nancy married Abraham's father, Thomas Lincoln, he was a nondescript Kentucky hunter who could not read a word. Nancy taught him to read, using her always present Bible as the textbook. And by the time she died, only twelve years after their marriage, Thomas Lincoln had been transformed from the shiftless, illiterate hunter into a reasonably affluent and intelligent farmer and justice of the peace, and was considered a man of substance in his community.

Little Abraham had been taught to read out of that same

* *Ibid.*

Bible, and it was his mother who guided into his hands such fine books as *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Aesop's Fables*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and *Parson Weems' Life of Washington*.

Nancy Lincoln was buried in a rudely fashioned pine box made by her husband, and laid to rest under a tree near the cabin home. Ten-year-old Abraham, as legend has it, was almost inconsolable, and his grief was heightened by the childish belief that the mother he had loved so well was in danger of eternal condemnation because there was no preacher around to give her a Christian burial. To soothe his childish fears, his father arranged for a parson to come all the way from Kentucky to their Indiana home, three months later, to preach and conduct a burial service.

A year later, Thomas Lincoln journeyed back to Kentucky to court a former sweetheart, now a widow, Sarah Bush Johnson. He was successful in his brief courtship and in December, 1819, brought back his new wife, together with her three children. She was a kindly, sensible, and attractive woman, and Abraham took to her at once.

The Lincolns lived at Pigeon Creek from 1816 to 1830 while Abraham grew from a child of seven to a young man of twenty-one. He was always tall for his age and by the time he was seventeen had already attained his full growth.

His gangling appearance belied a strength that was remarkable. Even at the age of ten, he had felled trees, wielded the sickle, threshed wheat with a flail, and performed other arduous tasks that few grown men could do as well. And as he grew older he became one of the most popular "hands" in the community, laboring at the then top wages of thirty cents a day.

Young Lincoln's work habits were not always above reproach, however. When Lincoln was still in his teens, one of his early employers said that while Lincoln was working for him "he was always thinking and reading." On one occasion he had remonstrated with the lad about it, but Lincoln had told him with a rather impudent grin that while his father had taught him to work hard, he had never taught him to love it.

His extreme height resulted in a tendency toward awkward-

ness. Many years later when he was sent to Springfield, Illinois, as a member of the state legislature, he was occasionally to be found on the dancing floor at social functions. And, although he sometimes proved to be a persevering and perspiring devotee of the dance, it could not be accurately said that he was a graceful one.

The story is told that he first met Mary Todd, later to become his wife, at one of these dances. Miss Todd, a pretty and vivacious young lady, drew Lincoln's attention like a magnet. After watching her swirl around the floor in the arms of one swain after another for the most of the evening, Lincoln finally approached the young lady, saying, "Miss Todd, I should like to dance with you the worst way."

The young woman accepted the inevitable and hobbled around the room with him. When she had returned to her seat, one of her companions asked mischievously, "Well, Mary, did he dance with you the worst way?"

The girl nodded ruefully, rubbing her aching feet. "Yes. The very worst."

Lincoln's face was very long and thin, and his features were large. He had thick black hair with an unruly cowlick, heavy black eyebrows, a prominent forehead, and a rather dark, sallow complexion. His eyes were gray. He stood about six feet four inches, and weighed about 180 pounds.

He considered himself to be ugly and was well aware that many people talked disparagingly of his awkwardness and homely personal appearance. Far from being hurt by such unfeeling remarks, he seemed rather to enjoy them.

One day, while traveling on a train, he was accosted by a stranger who said: "Excuse me, sir, but I have an article in my possession which belongs to you."

Lincoln was much surprised. "How is that?"

The stranger took a jackknife from his pocket. "This knife," said he, "was placed in my hands some years ago, with the injunction that I was to keep it until I found a man uglier than myself. I have carried it from that time to this. Allow me to say now, sir, that I think you are fairly entitled to it."

Lincoln's zeal for learning never abated throughout his boyhood years. And although in all he had less than twelve months of actual schooling spread over a dozen years, he read every book he could get his hands on, and would walk for many miles to hear cases argued in court. A country storekeeper in near-by Gentryville, Indiana, subscribed to a Louisville newspaper, and Lincoln regularly made the trek there to read and discuss its contents.

The men and boys in the neighborhood gathered at this store from time to time, and young Lincoln soon became the favorite member of the group because of his marvelous gift of expression and ability to tell stories. He could imitate to perfection the wandering preachers who came to Gentryville, and could repeat a political speech so stirringly that his listeners around the stove in the center of the store would occasionally break into unrestrained applause.

One of his favorite stories at this time concerned Daniel Webster. As his story went, the very young Daniel one day at school was guilty of a major violation of the rules. He was caught redhanded in the act and called up to the teacher's desk for punishment, usually the old-fashioned "ferruling" of the hand.

Little Daniel's hands happened to be very dirty. Knowing this, on his way to the teacher's desk, he surreptitiously spit upon the palm of his right hand, wiping it off on the side of his pants. Then, eyes wide and very innocent looking, he arrived at the teacher's desk.

"Give me your hand, Master Dan'l," said the teacher, very sternly.

Out went the right hand, partly cleaned. Aghast, the teacher stared at it for a full moment, then said, "Dan'l! If you can find another hand in this schoolroom as filthy as that, I will let you off this time!"

Out shot the left hand from behind Daniel's back, even grimmer than the first.

Outsmarted, the teacher nodded. Without rancor, he said, "That will do, Dan'l. You may take your seat."

Even in frontier surroundings, life was not all work and conversation. People gathered from miles around frequently for spelling and husking bees. There were also impromptu sporting contests among the neighborhood boys, and Abraham excelled at running, jumping, pitching the crowbar, and beat all comers at wrestling.

When things got a little dull there was the inevitable camp meeting to stir up a little excitement. Herndon, in his *Life of Lincoln*, relates the story of one of them as described to him by an eyewitness:*

To the right a strong, athletic young man, about twenty-five years old, was being put in trim for the occasion, which was done by divesting him of all apparel except shirt and pants. On the left a young lady was being put in trim in much the same manner, so that her clothes would not be in the way, and so that, when her combs flew out, her hair would go into graceful braids. She, too, was young—not more than twenty perhaps. The performance commenced about the same time by the young man on the right and the young lady on the left. Slowly and gracefully they worked their way towards the centre, singing, shouting, hugging and kissing, generally their own sex, until at last nearer and nearer they came. The centre of the altar was reached and the two closed, with their arms around each other, the man singing and shouting at the top of his voice:

“I have my Jesus in my arms
Sweet as honey, strong as bacon ham.”

There were very few frontiersmen who did not believe that this was true religion, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and the man who could not believe it, did well to keep it to himself.

Lincoln never attended an academy or college as a student. As a boy at home, we are told, he would write and do sums in arithmetic on the wooden shovel by the fireside. Then he would shave off the used surface and begin again.

At twenty-three Lincoln studied English grammar. When he

* *Life of Lincoln*, William H. Herndon and Jesse W. Weik (Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company).

became a member of Congress, to learn mathematics he studied and nearly mastered the six books of Euclid. At twenty-four, when he was supposed to be minding a shop, early biographers Nicolay and Hay write of the "grotesque youth habited in homespun tow, lying on his back, with his feet on the trunk of the tree, poring over his books by the hour, grinding around with the shade as it shifted from north to east."

In the winter of 1830, the Lincoln family moved to Macon County, Illinois, near Decatur, where they erected the inevitable log cabin. After a very severe winter, they moved to Goose Neck Prairie, in Coles County, where Abraham helped his father to build still another cabin.

That same spring Lincoln was hired by Denton Offut, an Illinois businessman, to take a load of merchandise via flatboat down the Mississippi River to New Orleans. Returning home after this trip, Abraham visited his family briefly, then left for good.

Offut had promised Lincoln a job as a storekeeper in a shop he owned and operated in New Salem, then a bustling little village in Sangamon County, Illinois. Because his trousers were in poor shape and he had no money, when he arrived in the village he arranged with a New Salem resident to cut 400 fence rails for every yard of cloth that would be necessary to make him a pair of trousers. In a later year, because of this experience, Lincoln would be called by political partisans "Honest Abe the Railsplitter," and his eldest son—following an official visit to Washington by the Prince of Wales—would be dubbed by Washington wags "The Prince of Rails."

It was as a grocery clerk in New Salem that Lincoln first became known as "Honest Abe." He once took six cents too much from a customer. Discovering his error, he walked three miles that evening, after closing the store, to return the money.

On another occasion, in weighing out a half pound of tea, he discovered that he had used a four-ounce weight on the scales instead. Horrified, he quickly closed the shop and rushed off to the home of his "victim" to deliver the rest of the tea.

In March, 1832, Lincoln announced his candidacy for the state legislature, but interrupted his campaign to volunteer for

service in the Black Hawk War, named for an old Indian chief who had broken his treaty with the government by staging repeated forays across the Mississippi River to kill and scalp white settlers. Volunteers were called out by the governor of Illinois to put an end to the Indian raids. Lincoln offered his services and later was elected a captain by his own company. The campaign lasted about three months, but Lincoln and his company were involved in no direct action.

Early Lincoln biographers report that Lincoln actually knew so little about drill-field terminology that once as his company approached a narrow gate twenty abreast, he could think of no command which would turn them "endwise." Undaunted, he issued the following order: "Company, ha-alt! Break ranks for two minutes and form again on the other side of the gate."

Returning that August, Lincoln plunged with renewed vigor into his campaign for the legislature and made his first political speech. He was then twenty-three years old. The Springfield (Illinois) *Republican* reported it as follows:

Gentlemen, Fellow-Citizens: I presume you all know who I am. I am humble Abraham Lincoln. I have been solicited by my friends to become a candidate for the legislature. My politics are short and sweet like an old woman's dance. I am in favor of a national bank. I am in favor of the international improvement system and a high protective tariff. These are my sentiments and political principles. If elected, I will be thankful. If defeated, it will be all the same.

Lincoln was defeated. To compound his troubles, his boss, Offut, had gone into bankruptcy and Lincoln was out of a job. He decided to enter into a partnership with a man named William F. Berry in the operation of a grocery store in New Salem.

Neither Lincoln nor Berry was an astute businessman, and Berry, to boot, was alcoholic, so that the enterprise soon failed. Berry eventually died, leaving Lincoln to pay a debt of \$1,100 owed by the firm. Because of the usurious interest rates then prevailing, it took Lincoln almost fifteen years to pay this debt, but pay it he did, gaining a reputation for scrupulous honesty that attached itself to him for the rest of his life.

CHAPTER II

LAW AND POLITICS

GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

—ABRAHAM LINCOLN

November 19, 1863

ABOUT THE TIME that Lincoln's business affairs were entering their leanest period, he was offered a job as the New Salem

postmaster. As mail from the outside world into the now slowly dying New Salem community was never very great, Lincoln had plenty of time on his hands. But a short time later friends secured an additional appointment for him as deputy surveyor for the county.

Lincoln was happy to discover that both surveyors and postmasters get a chance to meet and talk to a lot of citizens who, come election time, turn out to be voters. When the 1834 elections came around, the Democrats asked him to be their candidate for the legislature, even though they knew he was a Whig. It seemed as if everybody in the Sangamon County area knew and liked him, and his election was a foregone conclusion.

Lincoln ran again in 1836 and was re-elected, but in 1837 he left the community for good, partly because the town was dying but mostly because he felt that he was now ready to practice law. During his campaign for the legislature in 1834, he had become acquainted with a prominent Springfield, Illinois, lawyer by the name of J. T. Stuart who had taken a decided liking to him. Stuart had convinced him that his lack of formal education would not be a handicap to him in the practice of law, and hinted that he would be glad to take on the young Lincoln as a junior partner if he would "bone up" on the rudiments of law and move to Springfield.

In Lincoln's time one did not have to pass a bar examination or meet any specific scholastic requirements in order to practice law. To secure a license the applicant, in accordance with an Illinois statute enacted in 1833, procured a certificate from the courts of some county specifying that the candidate was a man of good moral character. Then he appeared before the clerk of the state supreme court for enrollment and to take the prescribed oath to support the Constitution of the United States and that of the state of Illinois. These conditions having been met, on March 1, 1837, the name of Abraham Lincoln was duly listed as an attorney entitled to practice law in all courts of Illinois.

We get some idea of Lincoln's efforts to provide himself with a legal training in his advice to a university student in later, more famous years that if he were determined to become a

lawyer the thing was half done already. "Begin with Blackstone's *Commentaries* and, after reading it through twice, take up Chitty's *Pleadings*, Greenleaf's *Evidence* and Story's *Equity* in succession. Work, work, work is the main thing."

While living in New Salem Lincoln had borrowed lawbooks from his friend Stuart, who lived in Springfield some twenty miles away. To get the books, he would walk all the way to Springfield and back, usually reading while he walked along the road. Long before he had received a license to practice law, Lincoln was acting in the capacity of "next friend" to his neighbors in New Salem and pleading their cases before justice of the peace courts in Boonville and Concord. As he had no license he received no fees for these services.

One of his first cases as an unlicensed lawyer in a "kangaroo" justice of the peace court involved a bastardy case in which he argued for the young unmarried mother. Lincoln, with his genius for sparkling word pictures, likened the man's character to a piece of white cloth which, though soiled, could again be made clean by washing and hanging in the sun to dry. But the character of the girl, who was probably less to blame than the man, he likened to a broken and shattered vase which could never be restored and made whole again.

Many years later he defended a man who was accused of bodily assault, apparently committed after extreme provocation on the part of the victim. Lincoln told the jury that his client was in the "fix" of a man who, while walking along the highway with a pitchfork over his shoulder, was attacked by a fierce dog that ran out at him from a farmer's yard. In fending off the dog with the fork, one of its prongs pierced a vital organ and the dog died.

"What made you kill my dog?" asked the farmer.

"What made him bite me?" countered the other.

"Why didn't you go after him with the other end of the pitchfork?"

"Why didn't he come at me with his other end?"

At this point in his story Lincoln whirled round and round on the witness stand with the imaginary dog in his arms in mock

description of the fight between dog and man, winding up the ridiculous tableau by pushing his own tail end towards the jury. This was his vivid way of illustrating his defensive plea of "the other fellow brought on the fight."

Despite the handicap of limited legal training, Lincoln was a strong lawyer, keen and shrewd. He delighted in introducing an unexpected element into his case pleadings, and time and again succeeded in discomfiting many an able lawyer who was sure that he had the stronger case.

On one occasion when the son of an old friend and former employer was charged with murder committed in a riot at a camp meeting, Lincoln volunteered to head his defense.

Several witnesses attested at the trial that they had seen the accused strike the fatal blow. It was night, but they swore that the full moon was shining clear and they had been able to see the whole affair distinctly. The case seemed hopeless, but Lincoln produced an almanac which showed that at that hour there was no moon. It was early evening before Lincoln had concluded his defense, saying, "If justice were done, before the sun set it would shine upon my client a free man." The jury took the hint and only a short time for its deliberation, quickly bringing in a verdict of "not guilty."

Lincoln's client was overjoyed. As he turned to thank the lanky lawyer he saw Lincoln standing at a window near-by looking out at the sun. As he strode to the lawyer's side, Lincoln threw his bony arm across the lad's shoulders, pointed to the sun, and said, "See, the sun is not down, and you are free."

Lincoln's law partnership with Stuart lasted from 1837 until 1841, at which time it was amicably dissolved by the mutual consent of both partners. Stuart's dominating interest was in the field of politics. In 1838, he ran against and defeated by the thin margin of 36 votes Stephen A. Douglas for the post of United States senator from Illinois.

When Stuart left for Washington in 1839, Lincoln stayed behind to handle the law practice. In addition to practicing law, Lincoln remained a member of the state legislature by virtue of successive re-elections from 1834 to 1842.

In the spring of 1841, Lincoln formed a new partnership with Stephen T. Logan, who was recognized as being one of the greatest lawyers then practicing in Illinois. Logan had had many opportunities to study the progress of Lincoln's law career and had formed a sincere admiration for the young man's capabilities. As a judge of the circuit court he had made the order admitting Lincoln to the Illinois bar. He had also met the young man in three cases argued before the state supreme court. Lincoln had won all three.

The firm of Logan and Lincoln lasted for approximately three and a half years. It was dissolved because Logan wished to take his own son into partnership with him.

In the fall of 1844, Lincoln formed a new partnership with William Henry Herndon, which was to endure for twenty-two years until Lincoln's tragic death. Herndon was then twenty-five years of age, nine years younger than Lincoln.

The Lincoln-Herndon partnership produced a strange blending of conflicting temperaments. Although both were staunch Whigs, Lincoln was considered a conservative while Herndon, an Abolitionist, was inclined to take more radical attitudes. Lincoln hated slavery, for example, but believed that if it were possible to contain slavery in the states where it was already established, and prevent its spread into new territories, it would gradually fall into disuse. Herndon, on the other hand, was a militant agitator against slavery who favored its immediate destruction as an institution by whatever means necessary. Then, too, Lincoln was a total abstainer from the use of intoxicants. Herndon, a very convivial and gregarious individual, often drank excessively.

Yet both had a mutual respect and liking for each other that was to smooth out and remove all obstacles to the harmonious conduct of partnership affairs. Herndon was quoted after Lincoln's death as saying that never in their long partnership had any serious disagreement arisen between the two. Herndon almost worshiped the ground on which Lincoln walked, and at times seemed almost more ambitious for Lincoln's political success than Lincoln himself.

Unfortunately, Herndon and Mary Todd Lincoln disliked each other with an intensity that bordered on the venomous. Herndon later attributed Lincoln's periods of melancholy to the death of Ann Rutledge and the fact that his marriage was not a happy one.

Some of the explanations advanced by early biographers for Lincoln's periodic moods of despondency tended to agree with Herndon's appraisal. But one of them deviated so far from the realistic as to write: "Although married, Lincoln was not mated, so that if we see him come into his office in the morning eating cheese and bologna sandwiches philosophically what can we expect but some periods of sadness and gloom? Emerson, who you and I hold in high esteem, had pie for breakfast all his married life, and in my opinion that is what clouded his memory the rest of his life after seventy years of age."

Despite the fact that intimate business and political relations often brought Billy Herndon and the Lincolns together at social functions, Herndon was granted the privilege of dancing with Mary Todd Lincoln on only one occasion, a few years before she became Mrs. Lincoln. Herndon engaged her for a waltz, which he appeared to enjoy immensely. After the dance, while escorting her back to her seat, he sought to compliment her on her graceful dancing. He told her that while he himself was very awkward she seemed to glide through the waltz with the ease and grace of a serpent. The young woman replied haughtily to the clumsy compliment, and a lifelong enmity erupted between them.

In Lincoln's time, it was the custom for lawyers to ride the circuit. Courts were rather primitive institutions and lawyers were scarce. Litigation was simple and usually determined by the principle involved in the particular case, rather than the citation of parallel cases as is now the rule.

Springfield lawyers rode the "Eighth Circuit," comprised of eight adjacent counties in that particular section of the state, following the circuit judge from town to town to provide legal counsel for the litigants involved in the cases to be tried by the judges.

Since they frequently traveled together the lawyers and judges readily became close friends. One day Lincoln and a certain circuit judge who was an old friend were bantering each other about horses, a favorite topic.

Finally Lincoln said, "Well, I'll tell you what I'll do, Judge. I'll make a horse trade with you, but it must be on the following terms: neither of us shall see the other's horse until it is produced here in the courtyard of the hotel, and both parties must trade horses. If either party backs out of the agreement, he does so under a forfeiture of twenty-five dollars."

"All right, I'll take you up on that," said the judge, and both he and Lincoln went in quest of their respective animals.

Hearing about the wager, quite a crowd of onlookers gathered in the yard of the hotel, anticipating some fun. Soon the judge returned, dragging at the end of the halter a horse which was blind in one eye and just about the boniest and sorriest piece of horseflesh that anyone in the crowd had ever seen. As the merriment of the crowd reached its peak, Lincoln walked slowly into the yard carrying a carpenter's horse over his shoulder. He set his horse down gently, then silently surveyed the judge's animal with a look of infinite disgust.

Finally he shook his head. "Well, Judge, this is the first time I ever got the worst of it in a horse trade."

One day while Lincoln was riding the circuit, a letter addressed to Lincoln arrived at his office from a New York firm. Thinking it might be important, Herndon immediately forwarded it to Lincoln without opening it. When Lincoln received the letter he found that it merely requested some information relative to the financial standing of one of his neighbors who had the reputation of being a credit "dead beat."

Mr. Lincoln replied:

"I am well acquainted with Mr. Jones, and know his circumstances. First of all, he has a wife and baby—together they ought to be worth \$50,000 to any man. Secondly, he has an office in which there is a table worth, say \$1.50, and 3 chairs worth, say \$1.00. Last of all, there is in one corner a large rat hole, which will bear looking into. Respectfully, A. Lincoln."

Lincoln held a pet theory all his life that all men were prompted by selfishness in doing good or evil. Whenever he got on this particular tack during the course of a discussion, most of his friends would laugh at him in a scoffing manner and quickly change the subject.

One day he was riding in a stagecoach en route to a trial in company with another circuit lawyer whom he had known for many years. The road was very muddy due to recent heavy rains and the coach skidded dangerously from one side of the road to the other. As they came to a rude wooden bridge spanning a little creek swollen by the torrential rains, Lincoln spied an old razorback sow on the bank of the creek making a terrible racket because her pigs had fallen into a muddy slough. They were hopelessly mired and in danger of drowning.

Lincoln called to the driver to stop the coach. Notwithstanding the fact that he was attired in his court clothes, he climbed down from the stage and walked over to the spot where the little pigs were squealing and struggling in the slough, sinking down to his knees in the mud and water. Then one by one he lifted all of the little pigs to safety.

Wet, bedraggled, and dripping mud, he climbed back into the stagecoach. Then, as he settled wearily into his seat, his lawyer friend turned triumphantly to him and said, "Now, Abe, tell me. Where did your selfishness come in when you helped those pigs out of that mud?"

Lincoln frowned, thought a moment, then brightened. "Why, bless your soul, Ed, that was a very selfish act on my part. I would have had no peace of mind all day had I gone on and left that suffering old sow worrying over her poor pigs."

CHAPTER III

LINCOLN'S FAMILY

My childhood's home I see again
And sadden with the view;
And, still, as memory crowds my brain,
There's pleasure in it, too.
Oh memory, thou midway world
'Twixt earth and paradise,
Where things decayed and loved ones lost
In dreamy shadows rise;
And, freed from all that's earthy vile,
Seems hallowed, pure and bright,
Like scenes in some enchanted isle,
All bathed in liquid light.

—ABRAHAM LINCOLN: *Written in 1844
while on a visit to the home of his
childhood*

EARLY BIOGRAPHERS of Lincoln stated that the first real love of his life was Ann Rutledge of New Salem, whose father was the proprietor of the Rutledge tavern where Abe boarded. At the time they became acquainted, she was engaged to a young man by the name of John McNamar who had left the community to seek his fortune in the East, promising to return within a year's time.

When he did not return, Lincoln opened his bid for the hand of the pretty young woman, who was then only seventeen years of age. After receiving Lincoln's attentions for several months, the girl promised to become his wife. Lincoln at the time could barely support himself, so it was decided that the

young woman should attend an academy in Jacksonville, Illinois, and Lincoln would devote himself to his law studies until the next spring. And then they would be married.

Fate ruled otherwise. Shortly after this arrangement was agreed upon, the girl became sick with "brain fever," and in August, 1835, died. Her death was a cruel blow to Lincoln.

Many Lincoln biographers treat the Ann Rutledge—Abraham Lincoln love affair as a myth which had no basis in historical fact. But William Herndon, Lincoln's law partner for twenty-two years, made a public lecture in Springfield, Illinois, on November 16, 1866—shortly after Lincoln's assassination—in which he bluntly proclaimed that Lincoln had loved Ann Rutledge in his youth but had never loved the woman he had married. Herndon's statement came as a chilling shock to the grieving Mrs. Lincoln and her children as Lincoln had never mentioned the name of Ann Rutledge to any family member.

But the facts are clear and indisputable that an Ann Rutledge did reside in the New Salem community and was engaged to a John McNamar at the time young Lincoln lived there. The fact that Lincoln knew both intimately lends considerable credence to the romance as reported by Herndon, who certainly was in the confidence of Lincoln and would have been in a position to know the truth.

People acquainted with Lincoln believed that the secret of his strange periods of melancholia—which were so typical of his moods in later years—were somehow interwoven with his memories of his mother, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, his sister Sarah, and Ann Rutledge, all of whom were deeply loved by Lincoln and removed from companionship with him by early, untimely deaths. Some Lincoln intimates were sincere in their belief that these three were the only women he had ever loved.

When, in 1837, Lincoln moved to Springfield to set up law practice, he made arrangements to room above a general store owned and operated by Joshua Speed, an old friend. Speed's clerk was young William Herndon. Speed and Herndon, bachelors also, shared upstairs sleeping quarters with Lincoln. One of the customers at the store was a promising young lawyer by

the name of Stephen A. Douglas, then rapidly forging ahead in Springfield political circles.

In 1839, Miss Mary Todd, of a very old and wealthy Kentucky family, arrived in Springfield to visit her sister, Mrs. M. W. Edwards. She was a lively and attractive young woman, then twenty-two years of age, and soon well aware of her ability to turn the heads of the young men of Springfield, then a booming municipality of over two thousand people.

After meeting the young woman at a social function, Lincoln, with the encouragement of Joshua Speed, also a Kentuckian and an intimate of the Edwards family, became a frequent visitor at the Edwards home. It was soon obvious to his friends that he was not immune to the charms of the Kentucky lass. It was also soon obvious that Lincoln did not have the field entirely to himself.

Although it seemed as if Miss Todd could choose at will among the eligible young men of the town, it became apparent that Stephen Douglas and Abraham Lincoln were her special favorites. Douglas's interest in the young lady was probably spurred by Lincoln's attentions to her. Being more polished in the social graces than the awkward, rawboned Lincoln, he quickly became a serious contender for her hand. The fickle Miss Todd, apparently flattered by the attentions of the two leading young men of the community, did nothing to discourage the attentions of either. When an acquaintance asked her which of the two men she planned to marry, she replied archly, "The one who has the better chance of becoming president."

But eventually it became whispered about in the social circles of Springfield that Mary and Lincoln had "reached an understanding" and soon would be married. And it was no secret that the snobbish Edwards clan thought that she was making a poor choice in selecting a poor backwoods lawyer who was so very far below her own social station.

Far from being dissuaded by the rumored engagement, Douglas renewed his suit with increased ardor. Mary flirted openly with him, perhaps to spur Lincoln on in his devotion. Instead, her flirtatious actions seemed to have had the opposite

effect on him. Becoming increasingly aware of his own homely looks and unpolished manners when contrasted to the handsome, dapper Mr. Douglas, he seemed almost to shrink from the competition. He quarreled bitterly with her concerning her actions, then broke off the engagement. But the physical attraction between the two was very real, and mutual friends soon effected a reconciliation. On November 4, 1843, they were married in an Episcopal ceremony.

To the union of Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd were born four sons. Only one was to survive to manhood; only two would outlive the father. Robert, the first born, was the only son who lived to celebrate a nineteenth birthday. Edward, who was born next, died at the age of four years in Springfield.

William, third oldest and probably the most beloved of the children to the parents—if such a distinction can ever be made—died in Washington at the age of eleven of an acute malarial infection resembling typhoid fever.

The baby of the family, Thomas, called Tad (short for tadpole, because of his large round head and disproportionately short body as a baby), died of tuberculosis at the age of eighteen, in 1871, five years after the death of his father.

While Mary and Abraham Lincoln were not compatible in many respects, and their marriage—insofar as Lincoln himself was concerned—perhaps not the most congenial, there was no shortage in the amount of affection lavished by the doting parents on each of the offspring.

In an era when to spare the rod was to spoil the child, Lincoln's children ran wild, uncontrolled for the most part by parental discipline. In fact, friends of the Lincoln family often felt that the parents took special pride in abetting the children's proclivities for getting into mischievous scrapes, thinking perhaps that these pranks illustrated a great evidence of imagination on their part.

Herndon complained plaintively in later years that many times during the Sunday visits of the Lincoln children to the law office, he had been forced to stand quietly by while the children ran pell-mell through the office upsetting furniture,

pulling books from wall shelves, and scattering them helter-skelter on the floor. Herndon knew that the quickest way to incur the displeasure of Lincoln was to reprimand the children in any way, "for what they thought, he thought, and what they disliked, he disliked." "Many's the time," he said later, "that I wanted to wring the necks of the Lincoln brats and pitch them out of the office window."

When the two older children were small, it was the Sunday custom of Lincoln to take them to his office while his wife attended church. On one Sunday morning, while his wife was making her customary preparations for the morning service, Lincoln placed the two children in their little red wagon and started off down the street, pulling the wagon with one hand and holding a book in the other, which he read as he walked.

Suddenly little Eddie tumbled out of the wagon and lay on the walk, crying piteously, as Lincoln, engrossed in his book, strode on, completely unaware that anything was wrong. Mrs. Lincoln, hearing the wails of her child, ran shrieking to the scene and gathered the crying but entirely unharmed baby in her arms.

While all of the Lincoln boys were unruly and brattish at times, they nevertheless possessed many lovable characteristics. Willie and Tad, only a few years apart in age, were "pals" and devoted to each other. Both were friendly, loved people, and inspired love in return. Each of the younger boys was strikingly similar to his father in this respect.

Robert, several years older, was more standoffish and reserved by nature, and appeared both in looks and temperament to resemble the Todd side of the family. He was also probably a little jealous of the younger boys, noting with envy how they were indulged in every childish whim by the parents. Robert was to state in the later years of his life that he had never been very close to his father.

Though it is perhaps true that Robert was something of a "cold fish" from the standpoint of emotional development, it is nevertheless a fact that he was the most brilliant of all the children. After graduating from Harvard Law School, he became

a very successful lawyer, a captain of industry, and a millionaire, before he died at the age of eighty-three. In the course of his life he served as president of the Pullman Company, Minister to Great Britain, and Secretary of War under Presidents Garfield and Arthur.

Robert was also the only Lincoln child to develop any fastidiousness in his manner of dress. The other children seemed to follow their father's pattern of seedy, unprepossessing attire. But Robert never developed the capacity to feel and appreciate the pain of another, which the President, Willie, and Tad developed to a marked degree.

When Willie died at the age of eleven of typhoid, Tad, then almost nine, was perilously close to succumbing to the same disease. It was touch and go for many months, but he eventually recovered. With Willie, his pal, now gone to a better place, Tad became his father's shadow, even to the point of sleeping in the same bed with him. With two of his sons now dead, Lincoln could deny the boy nothing. And the little boy with the big heart did much to heal the heartbreak of the parents caused by the loss of Willie.

Many a story is told by Lincoln biographers of the warmly affectionate Tad breaking into cabinet meetings to the consternation of members engaged in serious consideration of the conduct of the Civil War. He would dash over to his father's side, then, giving him a quick, hard hug, storm right out of the room again.

Everyone, including the harassed cabinet members, found it easy to forgive the little boy, whose only sin was that his affection overflowed at inopportune times.

When Lincoln died, it was the coldly efficient Robert who took complete charge of the funeral arrangements and effected the transfer of the family belongings from the White House to their home in Springfield. Tad was too young to be of much use. But it was Tad, again with his constant outpourings of affection and love, who eased as much as possible the pain in the heart of the widow. And he continued to do so during the five short years that remained to him.

When Tad died of a tubercular ailment on July 15, 1871,

Mrs. Lincoln again was crushed with grief. All reason for living seemed to have fled with the spirit that had left Tad's body. But even though the tragic loss of her three sons and husband over a period of a few decades made it seem as if nothing more tragic could happen to her, an even greater tragedy would shortly befall her.

Following the death of Tad, the woman who had sustained four great shock waves of bereavement since the time of her marriage began to exhibit eccentricities of behavior that alarmed her son Robert, who was now married and successfully practicing law.

She began to write letters to newspapers asserting that Congress should grant her a pension as the widow of a martyred President, and claiming that she was almost penniless. Since Lincoln had left an estate of approximately \$200,000, one third of which had been left to his widow—and these facts had been well publicized in the newspapers—Robert Lincoln, always very correct and proper, was greatly humiliated by his mother's actions. Then, too, she began to go on shopping sprees, buying things at exorbitant prices for which she would have no possible future use. And she carried such huge amounts of bonds and securities on her person that Robert feared for her personal safety.

In the spring of 1875, Robert Lincoln filed an affidavit in a Chicago court claiming that his mother was insane, and asked that she be committed by the court to an institution. He stated in the affidavit that she was unmanageable, went on lavish shopping sprees, and carried huge sums of money on her person. He asked that he be appointed business administrator of her estate.

Mrs. Lincoln's gentleness and subdued behavior at the trial won the sympathy of the nation; but on May 19, 1875, Robert had his way, and his mother, without actual specialized medical examination, was adjudged mentally incompetent. Following the verdict, Mrs. Lincoln was balked in an attempt to take her own life, and was removed to a private sanitarium at Batavia, Illinois.

Mrs. Lincoln believed herself to be sane and that Robert, her only living son, had deliberately fabricated the charges in

order to obtain control of her money. And she convinced enough of her influential friends that this actually was the case. On June 15, 1876, she was afforded a new sanity hearing. It lasted for only a few minutes and resulted in the court declaring her to be "restored to reason." Robert did not contest the action and did not appear at the hearing.

Mrs. Lincoln never fully forgave her son for branding her with the stigma of lunacy, and, although a technical reconciliation of a sort was eventually effected, their relationship remained cool until her death, several years later.

Robert's scrupulous handling of his mother's funds during the period of her confinement disproved suspicions that he had acted with venal purpose aforethought. But, while his mother's behavior through the years at times did indeed have its abnormal aspects, it is safe to say that Robert alone—of all four Lincoln sons—would have been capable of the drastic action he saw fit to take. For only in Robert Lincoln had the wells of human understanding and compassion never run very deep.

CHAPTER IV

SLAVERY IN THE UNITED STATES

ON THE CAPTURE OF FUGITIVE SLAVES
NEAR WASHINGTON

We owe allegiance to the state; but deeper, truer, more
To the sympathies that God hath set within our spirits core;
Our country claims our fealty; we grant it so, but then
Before Man made us citizens, great Nature made us men.

He's true to God who's true to man; wherever wrong is done,
To the humblest and the weakest, 'neath the all-beholding sun,
That wrong is also done to us; and they are slaves most base,
Whose love of right is for themselves, and not for all their race.

God works for all. Ye cannot hem the hope of being free
With parallels of latitude, with mountain range or sea
Put golden padlocks on Truth's lips, be callous as ye will,
From soul to soul, o'er all the world, leaps one electric thrill.

Chain down your slaves with ignorance, ye cannot keep apart,
With all your craft of tyranny, the human heart from heart;
When first the Pilgrims landed on the Bay State's iron shore,
The word went forth that slavery should one day be no more.

—JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

THOMAS JEFFERSON, a slaveholder himself, once said: "In a warm climate, no man will labor for himself who can make another labor for him. This is so true that of the proprietors of slaves a very small proportion indeed are ever seen to labor. And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have re-

moved their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are of the gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with His wrath? Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that His justice cannot sleep forever."

Jefferson did well to tremble. He resolved, as least to some extent, his personal problem as it concerned the troubling issue of slavery—which try as he might he could not personally justify—by providing for the freeing of all slaves working on his plantation at the time of his death. But its practice elsewhere in the South was to remain to trouble the nation for generations after his death, and eventually to bring it to the brink of self-destruction.

Foreign critics have long held—with some justification—that the United States is a country wherein the people themselves give only lip service to the greatest of ideals. They point with scorn to the fact that the colonists who fled European tyranny in search of personal liberty did not themselves forget to bring along their own slaves. Only Georgia, of all the founding colonies, was originated with a charter prohibiting slavery. But within twenty years the importation of slaves into Georgia was permitted, and this so-called free colony became a colony of plantations on which the employment of slaves was encouraged.

As early as 1619, the colonists of Virginia began the importation of African Negroes, first from the West Indies and then by direct trade with Africa. For many succeeding decades the trade was small, and at the beginning of the eighteenth century there were no more than 20,000 Negro slaves in all of the colonies. In every one of the colonies, however, slavery was legal when the Declaration of Independence was adopted, and it continued unabated except where it was altered or prohibited by the constitutions of later state governments.

In the South, the rise of the great plantation as the dominant institution of the land heralded increased trafficking in African slaves. The great plantation, producing single crops of tobacco or rice, depended upon cheap labor for its very existence. And the economic mastery of the planter was based on two prin-

ciples: the ownership of a cheap labor supply (slaves); and control of the land. As profits from the production of tobacco dwindled, more and more small farmers were squeezed out. Only those able to raise a larger tobacco crop at an ever decreasing margin of profit could survive the economic pinch and continue to prosper. The plantation, with slave labor, could. And, while cotton eventually replaced tobacco as the chief source of plantation revenue, for tobacco rapidly exhausted the fertility of the soil, the pattern established for maintaining the economic stranglehold by the plantation, particularly in coastal areas, remained unchanged in the South.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, two great divisions of thought on the issue of slavery had become manifest throughout the nation. The people in the North generally opposed the practice of slavery while those in the South were almost solidly in favor of it. By 1830, anti-slavery sentiment in the South was practically nonexistent. It was one thing for the North, which had no need of slaves, to piously abhor the degrading practice of slavery; it was quite another thing for the South, which now had almost its entire economy based upon cotton production, to do this.

The slavery question now began to permeate the thought and literature of the nation. In 1807, the British passed the Act of Abolition, which prohibited slave trading. During the same year, the United States government followed suit, forbidding the trafficking in slaves by its citizens but imposing only monetary penalties for violations. The young republic, having no patrol boats available, experienced serious difficulty in controlling the smuggling of slaves into the states, and they were shuttled in constantly in alarming numbers by way of Florida and Texas.

In 1820, the government declared the trade in slaves to be piracy and established the death penalty for traders. This proved to be nothing more than a gesture, as no death sentence was actually imposed prior to the start of the Civil War.

During the early years of the Union, nine of the thirteen states countenanced slaveholding. Four states had denounced

the practice in their constitutions and liberated their slaves. But as far back as 1797, a law had been passed by Congress forbidding slavery northwest of the Ohio. As virgin territories to the west became settled and new states added to the Union, the number of free states and slave states became exactly equal.

Power to decide for or against slavery in a newly formed state asking for entrance into the Union was vested in the two branches of Congress. In the Senate, as two senators represented each state, the proponents of freedom or of slavery stood evenly matched. But in the House of Representatives, where representation was based upon population, the free states had many more congressmen, as population in the North had grown tremendously in comparison with a slower rate of growth in the South.

As the nation's expansion westward continued, slaveholders began to join the trek to the new lands to begin their lives anew, taking their slaves with them. Northerners, who had no slaves, were already ensconced in these territories. It became the practice to accept new states into the Union in pairs—one slave state and one free state.

In 1818, settlers in the Missouri Territory, where there were already many slaves, petitioned Congress for admission into the Union. Eventually it was agreed that Missouri should be allowed entrance as a state with slavery. Maine would be added as a free state to counterbalance Missouri. This agreement further stipulated that henceforth all states made from territory in the Louisiana Purchase lying north of an east-west line across the country and even with the southern boundary of Missouri should be free. This was called the Missouri Compromise.

The reaction of the public was generally favorable. It was thought by many that the vexing slavery question had been settled for all time. But this proved to be wishful thinking.

Many opponents of slavery disliked the Compromise at first, but eventually came to regard it as an inviolable charter of freedom, particularly in view of the disproportionately strong influence in the affairs of the United States government exerted by politicians from the South.

But opposition to the practice of slavery continued to grow in the North, while its advocates in the South also became more vocal, rationalizing that slavery was a good thing for both the black and white races. Some even went so far as to quote Scriptural passages pertaining to the Hebrew slave trade as justification for its existence. Southern statesmen, positive that slavery was the basis for the South's economic well-being, loudly proclaimed its efficacy. Convinced that the North meant to destroy it, they began to cast about for legal means to insure its continued existence.

Even in Pennsylvania and Massachusetts, strongholds of Quaker and Puritan opposition to the slave trade, many influential people of wealth and power did not disapprove of slavery. Not a few of them believed that an assault on slavery would trigger an attack on other forms of property as well, which would culminate in anarchy or an abrogation of the *status quo*. Many persisted in their pro-South attitudes, even after the start of the Civil War. They were called "Copperheads," the name of a poisonous snake then quite prevalent in the Southwest Territory.

Honorable and humane men in the South scorned the slave hunter and the slave dealer. "Your children," said Lincoln on one occasion, "may play with the little black children but they must not play with the slave dealer's." On that basis alone, as Lincoln pointed out, the decent people of the South in effect condemned the very foundation on which the slave practice was based.

In 1828, a new protective tariff bill was passed that was aptly called the Tariff of Abominations. The new tariff act did not please the people of South Carolina. The state's chief spokesman, John Caldwell Calhoun, an ardent champion of free trade and states' rights, issued a paper known as the "South Carolina Exposition," setting forth a rather extreme viewpoint on state sovereignty. In 1831, he issued still another manifesto, declaring the inherent right of any state to nullify any federal law it believed to be unconstitutional. Then, in 1832, a special South Carolina convention issued an ordinance of nullification, declaring the onerous tariff act to be null and void. Acting as if on

cue, Calhoun, then Vice-President of the United States in the Andrew Jackson administration, resigned his office to become United States senator from South Carolina.

In the Senate he further propounded the doctrine that the federal government had no right to tax goods coming from Europe to the people of his state. This became known as the Nullification Doctrine, and asserted the right of a state to declare laws of the nation that it did not like to be of no effect. South Carolina, Calhoun declared, had been a state before there had been a Union. Therefore it was superior to the Union.

The South Carolina convention, which had passed the ordinance of nullification, also declared the state's intention to secede from the Union if force were used by the federal government to tax the goods arriving in their state from foreign countries.

The President of the United States, Andrew Jackson of Tennessee, was also of the personal belief that the recently passed tariff act was an abomination to all American citizens. But he was also the chief executive officer of the nation. And it was his sworn duty to execute the laws of the land, whether he privately agreed with them or not.

Jackson therefore declared that all the states were in the Union forever, and that no state had the right to withdraw from it whenever it might suit its whim. South Carolina, he said, must obey the law. And he sent federal troops and naval vessels to that state to compel its people to obey. The duties were collected in all South Carolina seaports.

South Carolina did not secede. But the people of all the slave states had watched the controversy with great interest. The seed of secession had been sown, and in a later day, not far distant, would bear a harvest of fratricidal blood.

CHAPTER V

THE DRED SCOTT DECISION

CAROLINA

The despot treads thy sacred sands,
Thy pines give shelter to his bands,
Thy sons stand by with idle hands,
Carolina!

He breathes at ease thy airs of balm,
He scorns the lances of thy palm;
Oh! who shall break thy craven calm,
Carolina!

Thy ancient fame is growing dim,
A spot is on thy garment's rim;
Give to the winds thy battle hymn,
Carolina!

Call on thy children of the hill,
Wake swamp and river, coast and rill,
Rouse all thy strength and all thy skill,
Carolina!

Till even the coward spurns his fears,
And all thy fields and fens and meres
Shall bristle like thy palm with spears,
Carolina!

Throw thy bold banner to the breeze!
Front with thy ranks the threatening seas
Like thine own proud armorial trees,
Carolina!

Fling down thy gauntlet to the Huns,
And roar the challenge from thy guns;
Then leave the future to thy sons,
Carolina!

—HENRY TIMROD

THE MISSOURI COMPROMISE, enacted into law in 1820, had provided that all land in the Louisiana Territory north of the line $36^{\circ} 30'$, except the state of Missouri, would be "forever free." Both Kansas and Nebraska were in the area north of this line. Unless the provisions of this law were repealed, therefore, it would be impossible for those who moved into this area to own slaves.

An outstanding political figure at this time was Stephen A. Douglas, sometimes affectionately called by his colleagues "the Little Giant." Douglas, all five feet four inches of him, was a fine-looking man. The ladies especially seemed to find his long, brown hair, thick and curly, and regular features livened by a quick and friendly smile pleasant to look upon.

In 1840, Douglas, then only twenty-seven years of age, was made a justice of the supreme court of Illinois. Three years later, he was elected to the national House of Representatives, and, in 1847, to the United States Senate. In the seven eventful years that followed he achieved a considerable nation-wide following for his at all times articulate espousal of a moderate solution to the slavery problem.

It was a political truism of that day that though the Southern Democrats were not strong enough in numbers to have one of their own men nominated, they were strong enough to prevent any candidate from the North from winning the Democratic nomination without their support.

Douglas, in 1854, had definite Presidential ambitions. With his keen, blue eyes fixed on political realities, he introduced into the Senate the Kansas-Nebraska bill. It provided that two new territories were to be made from land in the Louisiana Territory that lay north of the parallel $36^{\circ} 30'$. In these new territories the people would have the right to decide whether they wanted

their territory to be free or slave. In this bill also was included a provision for the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. Its effect would be to allow slavery to spill over into a territory from which it had been "forever" barred.

Due mainly to the persuasiveness of its author, the Kansas-Nebraska bill was passed by a vote of 37-14. Two Southerners voted against it; one of them was Sam Houston.

The passage of the bill made it increasingly obvious to those who cared that the Northern leaders of the Democratic and Whig parties, though they might claim fealty to the anti-slavery cause, in a showdown would do nothing to incur the anger of Southern politicians brandishing the threat of secession.

About this time, in the state of Wisconsin, a new political party was formed. The founders called it the National Republican Party. At first, only a straggling group of politicians—the brave few who had nothing to lose, anyway—joined the new party. But as dissatisfaction with the slavery-straddling stands of current Whig and Northern Democratic leaders increased, the party grew in strength.

Abraham Lincoln, too, had been reluctant to join the new party, but as realization grew that his own party would do nothing to stop the spread of slavery, he decided to become "un-Whigged" and join with it.

In June, 1856, the first National Republican Convention to nominate a candidate for the Presidency was held in Philadelphia. The convention nominated John C. Frémont to be the party's standard-bearer. Frémont, a colorful figure, had commanded troops during the Mexican War that had overthrown the Mexican government in California, and had been made its military governor. William Dayton of New Jersey was nominated as his running mate.

The Whig Party, oblivion bound by this time as most Northern Whigs had become Republicans while the Southern Whigs had joined the Democratic Party, nominated no candidates.

The Democratic Party chose James Buchanan of Pennsylvania, a Northern man with known pro-slavery sympathies, for their Presidential candidate.

The American Party nominated former President Millard Fillmore. Members of the American Party, perhaps the most important of several minor organized groups opposing slavery, were more familiarly called the "Know Nothings." It was a secret society to which only Protestants not married to Catholics were admitted. Originally it had been formed to stop the flood of German and Irish immigrants into the country. Whenever a member of this party was questioned he was bound by oath to answer only "I know nothing." Since the members were opposed to slavery they eventually joined the Republican Party.

On the Sunday before Election Day the public prayers in most Northern churches, Protestant or Catholic, were for the success of Frémont. Even the immortals of New England literature—Emerson, Whittier, Lowell, and Longfellow—begged votes for him.

But Buchanan promised a fair vote in Kansas if he should win. And the right of a people to decide their own way of life appealed to many as being the most democratic way to solve the problem of slavery. Buchanan was elected, although his popular vote was several hundreds of thousands less than the combined votes of his opponents.

Two days after the inauguration of Buchanan, the United States Supreme Court handed down a decision that rocked the nation quite as fully as the Kansas-Nebraska Act. The decision concerned a humble Negro slave from Missouri—Dred Scott.

Dred Scott was the property of an Army surgeon named Emerson who lived in St. Louis. In 1834, the doctor had taken Scott from St. Louis to an Army post in Illinois, and then to one in Wisconsin. Both of these territories were "free." Four years later, the doctor returned to St. Louis with Scott still an apparently willing captive.

After Dr. Emerson died, Scott sued Mrs. Emerson for his freedom, stating that he had been taken into free territory and therefore was entitled to liberty. The case was tried in various state courts in Missouri and then went to the United States Circuit Court. In each of the lower courts Scott's bid for liberty was denied on the legal premise that as a Negro he was not

a citizen and therefore had no right to bring his appeal into court.

When the case reached the United States Supreme Court, the eminent jurist Chief Justice Roger B. Taney, of Virginia, read the decision of the nine Supreme Court justices (four from the North and five from the South).

"The Negro," solemnly intoned Justice Taney, "is so far inferior to the white man that he could not sue in court as a citizen and so is still a slave."

The decision denying freedom to the slave was expected and perhaps would have caused little controversy, but Justice Taney went a step further. To implement the decision, he now added an unsolicited corollary. He declared that the right of property in slaves was expressly countenanced in the federal constitution and therefore Congress had no more right to make laws regarding slavery than it had in regard to any other type of property. The Missouri Compromise was therefore unconstitutional and void.

The effect of the Supreme Court decision as it pertained to the person of Dred Scott was soon to be nullified by the action of a Northern member of Congress who purchased Dred Scott and his family and promptly freed all of them. But the ill feeling engendered by Taney's unsolicited opinion was not soon dissipated and served to further crystallize growing anti-slavery sentiment in the North.

In 1858, at the age of forty-seven, Abraham Lincoln was nominated by Illinois Republicans for a seat in the United States Senate. Stephen Douglas was the Democratic candidate. To acquaint the people of that state with the campaign issues, the two candidates began a series of debates that were to focus the attention of the entire nation upon the campaign in Illinois.

The inflammatory question of slavery soon became the central issue. When the debates began, most political observers felt that the stubby, polished Douglas, who had already achieved national acclaim as a Senate orator, would sweep the lanky roughhewn Lincoln before him. But interest began to heighten throughout the nation as the debates progressed, and it became

increasingly clear that the two men were as well matched forensically as they were ill matched physically.

In the course of the debates Lincoln pointed out that Douglas upheld the Dred Scott decision, which denied to Congress the right to make laws regarding slavery, yet had sponsored the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which gave this right to the people of newly formed territories.

Douglas defended his apparently contradictory position by stating that of course the people of a territory did not have more power than Congress. To clarify this stand he evolved the "Freeport Doctrine," which stated that the people of a territory could control slavery by passing laws that would make it unprofitable for a slaveholder to settle in their territory.

Douglas and Lincoln both sought to avoid personalities, but Lincoln's better temper gave him the advantage in this respect. Only once did he stoop to the level of recrimination, when he was stung, to say of his rival: "I don't want to quarrel with him . . . to call him a liar, but when I come square up to him, I don't know what else to call him."

Douglas, under ceaseless harassment from Lincoln, at one meeting cried out: "I don't care whether slavery is voted up or down. I don't believe the Negro is any kin of mine at all. Who among you expects to live, or have his children live, until slavery shall be established in Illinois or abolished in South Carolina?" Douglas said frankly on one occasion that on any question between Negroes and white men, he was on the side of the white men. On the other hand, if an issue raged between Negroes and crocodiles, he would be on the side of the Negroes.

Lincoln, on the other hand, never failed to deny Douglas's charge that he believed in "nigger equality." He gave his opinion that "there is a physical difference between the white and black races which I believe will forever forbid the two races living together in social and political equality." But in the next breath he maintained that "in the right to put into his mouth the bread that his own hands have earned, the Negro is the peer of Judge Douglas or any other man."

Lincoln believed that the people of the South were acting

as the people of the North would act in a similar situation. "If slavery did not now exist among them, they would not introduce it. If it did now exist among us, we should not instantly give it up. . . . I surely will not blame them for not doing what I should not know how to do myself."

But Lincoln had hated slavery all of his life and wished to keep it forever out of the free states and new territories. In the knight-on-a-white-horse phraseology so beloved by his generation, it was his intention, he said, "to strive until the sun shall shine, the rain shall fall, and the wind shall blow upon no man who goes forth to unrequited toil."

Douglas traveled to and from the sites of the seven debates in a private railroad car provided by George B. McClellan, who had resigned from the Army to become an official of the Illinois Central Railroad. The railroad did not see fit to extend the same courtesy to Lincoln, and he was obliged to content himself with a seat in a coach car.

Douglas's moderate stand on slavery during the debates mollified the people of Illinois, but his emergence as a something-less-than-forthright advocate of their cause antagonized the people of the South.

The election returns gave Lincoln's party a plurality of 5,000 votes, but the arrangement of election districts was such that a few more Democratic representatives than Republican were elected. The state legislature then re-elected Douglas to the United States Senate.

In his defeat Lincoln nevertheless gained considerable personal prestige. He had proved his mettle by tangling with an opponent of considerable national political stature and had more than held his own.

But his defeat hurt. When Lincoln was asked how it felt to lose the election, he smiled wryly and said that he felt like a boy who had stubbed his toe. He was too big to cry but it hurt too bad to laugh.

CHAPTER VI

LINCOLN IS ELECTED PRESIDENT

ICHABOD *

So fallen! so lost! the light withdrawn
Which once he wore!
The glory from his gray hairs gone
Forevermore!

Oh dumb be passion's stormy rage,
When he who might
Have lighted up and led his age,
Falls back in night.

Let not the land once proud of him
Insult him now,
Nor brand with deeper shame his dim,
Dishonored brow.

Of all we loved and honored, naught
Save power remains—
A fallen angel's pride of thought,
Still strong in chains.

All else is gone; from those great eyes
The soul has fled;
When faith is lost, when honor dies,
The man is dead!

* Samuel 4:21: "And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel."

Then, pay the reverence of old days
To his dead fame;
Walk backward, with averted gaze,
And hide the shame!
—JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

SOMEONE ONCE SAID that when war comes to a democracy it is usually the result of failure by her diplomats. If left to their own devices, the people who must bear the brunt of the bloodletting would seldom seek war.

Theodore Parker once said: "We are a rebellious nation. Our whole history is treason; our blood was attainted before we were born; our creeds are infidelity to the mother church; our constitution, treason to our fatherland. What of that? Though all the governors in the world bid us commit treason against man and set the example, let us never submit."

Some people, mainly those in the North, thought that in permitting the practice of slavery we committed treason against our fellow man. Others, mainly in the South, felt that slavery in effect bettered the standard of living for the transported African slave and hence was justifiable even on moral grounds.

But the good in the practice, if there were any, was greatly obscured by its obvious cruelty. It began with the recruitment itself, which usually consisted of surrounding an African village after dark. Then, to stampede the unsuspecting villagers, on a given signal the raiders simultaneously fired huts, blew noisy horns, and uttered bloodchilling yells. As the natives rushed out of their huts the old men and women were ruthlessly speared or shot down. Only the younger natives deemed to be of sufficient value were captured and herded on ships for transportation to America. Many of the slaves being thus transported refused to eat because they feared that they were being fattened for cannibalistic rites, and casualty tolls en route were sometimes tremendous.

Every slave family ran the risk, upon the death or impoverishment of the owner, of being ruthlessly torn asunder. It is not

strange then that Lincoln in a later day came to this judgement: "If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong."

The law courts of the South in pre-Civil-War days were "naturally" more concerned with protecting the rights of the white slaveowner than they were with establishing the fact that his black chattel might have any rights whatever. For example, there was the case of *John Jordan and Wife, et al., v. Benjamin H. Cameron, defendant*, an equity trial pleaded before Judge Hill (May Term, 1852, Supreme Court of Georgia).

The bill set forth the following facts: in 1798, Sion Smith of Washington County died testate, leaving a Negro woman named Jane to his wife for life. At her death, the slave and her increase were to be *equally divided* among his five children, or among such of them as should survive their mother and the children, if any, of such as should die before her. Some fifty years later, most of the slaves involved had somehow wound up in the possession of Mr. Cameron. The only basis for the court decision was whether or not the provisions of the fifty-year-old will were still legally valid in so far as they pertained to legal ownership of the slaves mentioned in the will. No constitutional question of the Negroes' rights under the federal Bill of Rights was here to be considered: the right of Mr. Smith to divide and assign the lives of his Negro chattels in any way he saw fit was alleged to him by Georgia courts without any question.

In a court trial involving a slave charged with the murder of a white man (*The State v. Jarrot*, June 1840, Supreme Court of North Carolina) the august court determined that a verbal insult, when spoken by a slave to a white man, constitutes the grossest degradation. When spoken by the white man to the slave—whose passions are, or ought to be, tamed down to his lowly condition—it must be considered as but a slight injury.

In fairness, however, it must be stated that the law of the times, as administered by the courts of the South, did not sanction unsupervised cruelty to the slave. It provided for the punishment of all trivial offenses by slaves by carrying them before a justice of the peace who was authorized to have them publicly

whipped. The law did not permit a slave forcibly to resist assault and battery by a white man. It was his duty to submit or flee to his master for protection.

Thus it is difficult to say that the Civil War followed the usual pattern and was caused by a failure of diplomats. For by 1860 the slavery issue had assumed the aspects of a crusade, and the feelings of the people were often more inclined to run rampant than were those of the diplomats, who, for the most part—perhaps for too long—had counseled moderation and compromise.

John Brown, for example, was not a diplomat. He was a common dirt farmer who hated slavery with the uncommon zeal of a religious fanatic. He had stated publicly on more than one occasion that he would "go out, gun in hand, to kill it." This he proceeded to do.

For several years prior to 1859, Brown had been in the foreground of the fierce quarrels that had been in process in Kansas between pro-slavery and anti-slavery factions. In 1859, at the head of a large party of abolitionists and Negroes, he invaded the nearest slave state and seized the United States arsenal at Harper's Ferry. Robert E. Lee headed a force against him, recaptured the arsenal, and liquidated the uprising. Brown was tried and hanged.

Many people thought that Brown was insane, and that an asylum rather than a hangman's noose should have been his fate. But there are always those who confuse any type of extremism with insanity. Viewed in a later day, there appeared to be no hint of insanity in the last words uttered by this "mad-mad." They were at the very least prophetic: "The Negro question will never be settled except by the shedding of blood."

Certainly the methods used by John Brown and his followers were wrong, and sometimes they evidenced the same type of cruelty he had sworn to uproot. But there was a magnificence of spirit inherent in the misadventures of this Kansas dirt farmer. As surely as truth crushed to earth would rise again, so time and truth would eventually abolish slavery in the United States.

But truth works slowly when unhurried by overt action. And many generations of Negroes would be born, live their entire lives in oppression, and die before time and truth meted out inexorable justice.

Brown did not feel that there was that much time. And so he died, with several of his sons, sharing in the same risk he had asked others to take. Many in the North disclaimed his extremism, but his death added to the bitterness of the millions who hated slavery, and did nothing to help make further compromise possible.

On the cheerless, rain-swept day that John Brown was hanged, Longfellow wrote in his diary: "This will be a great day in our history, the date of a new revolution quite as much needed as the old one. Even now, as I write, they are leading old John Brown to execution in Virginia for attempting to rescue slaves. This is sowing the wind to reap the whirlwind, which will soon come."

The decade of 1850-59 also witnessed the passing from the national scene of Calhoun, Clay, and Daniel Webster. Jefferson Davis succeeded to Calhoun's place as spokesman for the cause of the South. Stephen A. Douglas and Charles Sumner of Massachusetts succeeded to the leadership relinquished by Clay and Webster.

Webster, of whom it was said that no one could be as great as he looked, passed from the scene at a time when his tremendous prestige and popularity had been somewhat dimmed by his championship of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850.

Webster believed, as did Henry Clay, that the only way to preserve peace was by compromise. But many people in the North believed that he had sold his principles for Southern votes in an effort to get himself elected President. Perhaps no man in the nation was better qualified, and it certainly would not have been strange if he had expected that the people would elect him.

Webster had thick black hair and eyes that seemed to glow like diamonds. His voice was deep and rich. His physical appearance was so striking that he seemed almost like a giant,

although he was only five feet ten inches and his weight never topped two hundred pounds. When he entered a room, people stopped talking and almost every eye turned to watch him.

"He looks like a king," a stranger remarked, seeing Webster for the first time.

"King!" exclaimed a bystander. "Good heavens! He looks more like a small cathedral!"

But Webster, in the waning years of his career, misjudged the temper of the people. His stand for the Fugitive Slave Law was to cost him so many friends that he could never become President. After his championship of this law, which forced citizens of the North to help capture and return runaway slaves, Emerson wrote: "The word honor in the mouth of Mr. Webster is like the word love in the mouth of a whore." And John Greenleaf Whittier dedicated the poem "Ichabod" to his "honor," which Webster's friends later agreed hurt him more keenly than any other public criticism he had ever received.

The criticism was, of course, too harsh, for Webster, together with Henry Clay, had labored an entire lifetime to bring about an acceptable compromise to the slavery question so that peace might be maintained and the Union spared. The people sensed this, and when Webster and Clay died the nation mourned their passing.

Webster was buried in the old colonial burying ground at Marshfield, Massachusetts, near the sea that he had loved so well in life. And a repentent Whittier was moved to write:

Wise men and strong we did not lack,
But still with memory turning back,
In the dark hours we thought of thee,
And thy lone grave beside the sea.

Whittier, of course, was, for the North, one of the two chief spokesmen through anti-slavery literature. Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe was the other. Both were sincerely dedicated to the cause of human freedom. Mrs. Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* became a best seller soon after publication, in 1852, and perhaps reached

a greater number of readers than all of Whittier's works combined.

John Greenleaf Whittier, perhaps the most forceful anti-slavery poet, was also a politician, and for a while had high hopes of making a name for himself in politics as well as in literature. He was elected to represent his district in the state legislature and might well have been elected to the national Congress later. In 1833, however, he joined the abolitionists, which, during his generation, had much the same effect as a politician joining the Communist Party today. Although already well known in literature, the leading magazines of the North would no longer publish his works. He was even mobbed, and the office of an anti-slavery paper he was editing in Philadelphia was sacked.* Persecution, however, did exactly nothing to dissuade him from his abolitionist beliefs.

Where Daniel Webster and Whittier in their separate ways went awry, Abraham Lincoln was right on target, and, as his stock mounted during his debates with Douglas, an increasing number turned to him as their leader and spokesman. For though Douglas had defeated Lincoln in their contest for senator, the people were loath to forget the backwoods lawyer with the kindly, homely face, sane arguments, and never-ending fund of droll stories.

Yet, in fact, Lincoln's position on slavery was similar to Webster's. Both took a middle-of-the-road position between the extremes of the abolitionists and of Southern eulogy as exemplified by the statement of William Simms, in 1852, that "slavery is a wisely devised institution of heaven devised for the benefit, improvement and safety, morally, socially and physically, of a barbarous and inferior race, who would otherwise perish by famine or by filth, by the sword of disease, by waste and destinies, forever gnawing, consuming, and finally destroying."

Throughout the slavery dispute the fundamental aim of both

* Reuben Post Halleck, *History of American Literature* (New York: The American Book Company).

men was not to destroy slavery as an institution but rather to preserve the Union. Both incurred, therefore, the ill will of the abolitionists. Both recognized slavery as an evil, however, and opposed its extension.

In 1860, in a national convention in the city of Chicago, the Republican Party chose Abraham Lincoln as their nominee for the Presidency of the United States. The Democratic convention, meeting at Charleston, South Carolina, split into two groups. The Northern Democrats wanted Stephen A. Douglas as their standard-bearer. The South, alienated by his less-than-vigorous stand for slavery in the Lincoln-Douglas debates, would not have him.

Unable to control the convention, the South broke away and nominated John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky. The Northern Democrats nominated Douglas. With the strong Democratic Party now split into two factions, Lincoln was elected to the Presidency in November, 1860, to take office in March of the following year.

In one of her most ironic twists, destiny had chosen the gentle barefoot boy from the Western frontier, the lad who, as legend has it, had chased a snake for several hundred yards to prevent it from swallowing a frog, to lead the nation, at the age of fifty-one, into one of the greatest blood baths the world has ever known.

CHAPTER VII

THE WAR BEGINS

THE MORAL WARFARE

When Freedom, on her natal day,
Within her war-rocked cradle lay,
An iron race around her stood,
Baptized her infant brow in blood;
And, through the storm which round her swept,
Their constant ward and watching kept.

Then, where our quiet herds repose
The roar of baleful battle rose,
And brethren of a common tongue
To mortal strife as tigers sprung,
And every gift on Freedom's shrine
Was man for beast, and blood for wine!

Our fathers to their graves have gone;
Their strife is past, their triumph won;
But sterner trials wait the race
Which rises in their honored place;
A moral warfare with the crime
And folly of an evil time.

So let it be. In God's own might
We gird us for the coming fight,
And, strong in Him whose cause is ours
In conflict with unholy powers,
We grasp the weapons He has given—
The Light, and Truth, and Love of Heaven.

—JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

A WISE MAN ONCE SAID that no man is so dangerous as a good man who is wrong. No one will dispute the fact that the people of the South were inherently as good as the people of the North. But in backing a system of human bondage they were in the wrong.

The seed of secession had taken deepest root in South Carolina, where John Calhoun had long preached the doctrine of states' rights. Now he was dead, but his philosophy of government lived after him.

Upon Lincoln's election to the Presidency, and while Buchanan was still administering the duties of the office, the state of South Carolina declared that she was out of the Union and had become *ipso facto* an independent nation. The Southern states of Louisiana, Texas, Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and Florida quickly followed South Carolina's lead. By the time that Lincoln had assumed the Presidency these states had formed a new union of states, which was called the Confederate States of America. Jefferson Davis, who had become the outstanding spokesman of the Southern cause upon the death of Calhoun, was elected president.

The question of the right to secession was a debatable one, and many Republicans and Northern Democrats were of the opinion that it would be best to let the Southern states go their way in peace, for the temper of the new nation was well known. The people of the Confederacy were prepared to fight to the death for their right to secede. And why should they be forced to return to a partnership that was distasteful to them?

Unfortunately for the South, the act of secession demanded strong measures to ensure its ability to resist effectively any overt measures that might be brought against it by the North. To build a military strength that could afford them the right to determine their own future, it became the practice of the seceding states to seize all government arsenals, ships, forts, money, and military equipment they found within the borders of their states. Thus it was that the fall of Fort Sumter, a government arsenal built by the federal government for the protection of

Charleston, South Carolina, triggered the start of the Civil War and rendered academic all other questions regarding secession.

Fort Sumter, built on an island in the harbor of Charleston, was manned by only a small garrison of soldiers. When South Carolina seceded, state officials set up a clamor demanding that the United States give up this fort. And when the federal government, seeking to reinforce the garrison, sent a ship with food and military supplies, it was promptly fired upon by shore batteries manned by Confederate troops, and driven back.

Lincoln assumed the duties of the Presidency about this time and decided that he could not allow the call of Major Robert Anderson, commanding the Fort Sumter garrison, to go unheeded. He ordered that the shipment of necessary food and supplies to the beleaguered garrison be promptly dispatched. When the news of his order leaked out, Confederate shore batteries again began a bombardment of the fort, which culminated in the surrender of the federal garrison.

As the news of the humiliating capture of Fort Sumter was flashed to the North, a white-hot flame of patriotism spread across the Union. Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers and found his call answered by several times that number. The South, of course, reacted in high glee, and several more states passed ordinances of secession. Virginia, North Carolina, Arkansas, and Tennessee quickly declared themselves in the Confederate camp, and the numbers of seceding states reached eleven.

The choice between state and nation was not always an easy one for Southerners to make. And loyalty was oftentimes based on emotion rather than logic. Robert E. Lee resigned his commission in the United States Army when the state of Virginia seceded, stating simply: "I have been unable to make up my mind to raise my hand against my native state, my relatives, my children, and my home."

Nathaniel Hawthorne, the New England author, expressed sympathy with Lee's viewpoint but added wryly: "If a man loves his own state and is content to be ruined with her, let us shoot him if we can but allow him an honorable burial in the soil he fights for."

At the outset of the war, the South believed that cotton alone was a guarantee of victory. Deprived of cotton, the North and England supposedly would collapse, due to the ruination of their economies by the bankruptcy of their textile industries. England, the South felt, for her own survival must declare herself on the side of the secessionists. This expectation was never realized. England, in 1862, was on the verge of recognizing the Confederacy. And had it not been for the good services of Lord Bright, one of the few friends of the North then to be found in all of Britain, it might have done so. But Bright cautioned the British people:

It has been said, "How much better it would be . . . for us that these States should be divided. . . ." There cannot be a meaner motive than this . . . that the United States should be severed and that the North American continent should be, as the continent of Europe is, in many states and subject to all the contentions and disasters which accompanied the history of the states of Europe. I should say that, if a man had a heart within him, he would rather look forward to the day when, from that point of land which is habitable nearest to the Pole, to the shores of the great Gulf, the whole of that vast continent might become one great confederation of states . . . with freedom everywhere, equality everywhere, law everywhere, peace everywhere; such a confederation would afford at least some hope that man is not forsaken of Heaven, and that the future of our race may be better than the past. . . .

And it was America's good friend Lord Bright, again, who placed a placating hand on the sleeve of the Empire when an apoplectic Britain was about to blow a gasket over an incident known to history as the "Trent Affair," when the North had seized on the high seas certain Southern diplomats on route to England aboard a British merchantman.

Lincoln, after quite a struggle within himself, eventually decided to return the prisoners in order to "stick to American principles concerning the rights of neutrals." It was not a popular decision. Many of the good people of the North swallowed hard when informed of the Presidential reversal of policy. And the

poet Lowell had his finger on the popular pulse when he penned:

We give the critters back, John,
Cos Abram thought 't was right;
It warn't your bullyin' clack, John,
Provokin' us to fight.

When England failed to declare herself in the war on the side of the South, it meant but one thing. The war would be decided on the basis of which side possessed the superiority of military arms. And the overwhelming superiority of the North's population and industrial might appeared to leave little doubt as to the eventual outcome.

With the triggering of the conflict, the fundamental problem of the Lincoln administration was the raising of armies and the sudden conversion of a community that was essentially industrial into a disciplined military organization. And after the first flush of war hysteria had passed, this proved to be no easy task.

Without the wisdom of Lincoln's leadership it is doubtful that the North could have muddled through to victory. Its military leadership was remarkably inept. The first Chief of Staff, General Winfield Scott, had long since outlived his usefulness to his country and was indeed tottering on the brink of senility. Generals Burnside, Hooker, McClellan, and Frémont were hesitant, halting, unsure—ever inclined to overestimate the inferior resources of the enemy, quick to pass from the offensive to the defensive, and always reluctant to press an advantage. The most able Northern general was apparently a butcher, seemingly ever willing to pay generously with human blood for meager gains.

The supercautiousness of General McClellan in particular, who headed the Army of the Potomac, exasperated Lincoln on many occasions. On one occasion, irritated by McClellan's inactivity, Lincoln sent him this sharp note:

MY DEAR MR. MCCLELLAN: If you don't want to use the army,
I should like to borrow it for a while. Yours respectfully,
A. LINCOLN

On another occasion, annoyed by the discrepancy in the

number of troops reported to be dispatched to General McClellan and the number this cautious general acknowledged as having received, Lincoln exclaimed: "Sending men to that army is like shovelling fleas across a barn yard—half of them never get there!"

On still another occasion Lincoln impatiently demanded that McClellan send him more detailed accounts concerning the activity of the army under his command. In anger, McClellan telegraphed the President:

PRESIDENT A. LINCOLN, WASHINGTON, D. C. WE HAVE JUST CAPTURED SIX COWS. WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH THEM?

GEORGE B. MC CLELLAN.

McClellan received this straight-faced reply:

GENERAL GEO. B. MC CLELLAN, ARMY OF THE POTOMAC: AS TO THE SIX COWS CAPTURED—MILK THEM. A. LINCOLN.

The nation's devotion, unreservedly offered to Lincoln in 1861, underwent a subtle change after eight months had passed without a single marked military success. And a startling defeat at Bull Run, instead of rallying the people to greater effort, seemed to plunge them into greater apathy. Sensing the inability of the incumbent Secretary of War, Simon Cameron, to cope with the rising flood of catastrophic events, Lincoln moved swiftly to plug the hole. With characteristic abnegation of self, he appointed the able, if acid-tongued, Edwin Stanton to Cameron's vacated post. Stanton had made several derogatory comments about Lincoln that had been duly reported in the press. On one occasion, he had referred to Lincoln as a vacillating fool. When the comment was relayed to Lincoln, the President smiled: "Did Stanton tell you I was a fool?" he asked. "Then I expect I must be one, for he is almost always right, and generally says what he means."

On many occasions General McClellan failed to show proper respect to his Commander-in-Chief. One evening when Lincoln called at the general's home on an important matter, McClellan refused even to see him. And on one occasion when McClellan

had boorishly refused to respond to a Presidential request to meet with him, Lincoln soothed an irate aide with the remark: "Never mind; I would hold McClellan's horse if he would only bring us success."

Minor successes by Grant at Fort Donelson and the naval victory of the *Monitor* over the *Merrimac* momentarily restored the nation's equilibrium. The naval success broke through the long gloom of the North and caused a "delirium of excitement."

After this brief lift, disaster piled upon disaster. Pope's troops were annihilated by Jackson in Virginia. Burnside made a brash attack on Lee at Fredricksburg and was driven back with heavy Union casualties. Hooker contributed his bit by taking a beating at Rappahannock.

After a victory for the North at Antietam had partly lightened the depressing outlook, Lincoln, on September 22, 1862, announced that he would issue an Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. The effect on the nation was electrifying. With a stroke of his pen, Lincoln transformed the war against secession into a crusade against evil. As an added fillip, 180,000 Negro troops joined the Union side. Prior to their emancipation, Negroes in uninvaded areas had remained submissive to their masters. But when Union troops were near, an overwhelming number joyfully sought their freedom.

The last great battle of the year was Fredericksburg (December 13, 1862). It turned into an enormous Union disaster. General Burnside's troops repeatedly made frontal assaults on Confederate troops impregnably entrenched on Marye's Heights, but were repulsed each time with staggering losses.

The rebel victory gave the Southern cause a tremendous lift, but a Confederate soldier who witnessed the gallant though futile Union attacks later said that he had never doubted the eventual Southern triumph until he had seen with what desperate bravery the Union troops had fought at Fredericksburg.

CHAPTER VIII

THE WAR ENDS

SECOND INAUGURAL ADDRESS

. . . Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes his aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered—that of neither has been answered fully.

The Almighty has His own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through his appointed time, he now wills to remove, and that he gives to both North and South this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to him? Fondly do we hope—ferently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

With malice toward none; with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations.

—ABRAHAM LINCOLN (1865)

LINCOLN WAS OF THE OPINION that in order to take full advantage of the Union's superiority in manpower, its troops should keep constant pressure on the Confederate troops, so that the rebels would be unable to shuttle their forces from one point to another. Lee had been using this tactic extremely effectively throughout the war. The federal troops not actually engaged in the fighting should help the troops engaged in actual combat by advancing. In other words, as Lincoln remarked, "Those not skinning can hold a leg."

During the early years of the conflict, Lincoln's command staff seemed to labor under the delusion that the war could be won without pitched battles. Consequently they sought to win it by planning, preparation, and grand strategy. Unfortunately for the Northern cause, usually by the time the Union officers had completed their lengthy preparations and were at last ready to confound the opposition with their genius, the rebel troops had slipped quietly away.

Lincoln knew better. He knew that the war could only be won by bitter fighting. And his search for a fighting general never faltered. When he found one he did not easily let him go.

In March, 1862, a large body of perhaps 30,000 federal troops commanded by Ulysses S. Grant was encamped at Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee. Grant, making full use of his personal privilege as a commanding officer, made his personal headquarters at Savannah, Tennessee, on the other side of the Tennessee River and almost nine miles from the main body of his troops. He traveled back and forth from his headquarters each day like a commuting suburbanite, reporting to his army each morning and returning in the evening to sleep in a comfortable clean house.

While enlisted men for many centuries have always suspected that war is not hell to the "officer class" to the same degree that it is for them, nevertheless there is no satisfactory explanation for Grant's desire to leave his army every night to sleep.

Early one morning while Grant was comfortably asleep in his house far down the river, a large Confederate army under

Johnston stormed out of the woods and overran the sleeping Union camp. By the time Grant could reach the scene the Union camp was in chaos and its plight desperate. Grant restored a semblance of order and drove the enemy from the field, but the casualties sustained by his troops were tremendous.

A delegation of strong administration supporters made a special trip to Washington to attempt to have Grant removed from his command because of his negligence. Lincoln listened intently to their entreaties, then shook his head.

"No," he said firmly, "I can't do it. I can't lose this man. He fights."

It would have been a simple matter for a lesser man to mollify an incensed nation by throwing a seemingly incompetent general to the dogs, but Lincoln was made of stouter stuff. He saw the good in the man in the general's worst hour, and held onto the fighter who would "chew and choke" the rebels until their will to fight would be destroyed.

Lincoln had no fear of being found in the company of unpopular men. His General in Chief (1862-64), Henry Halleck, was also an unpopular man. Halleck had a very unprepossessing appearance and delighted in insulting Washington officeholders and politicians at every opportunity. Lincoln once said he was Halleck's friend because nobody else was.

On one occasion when a young soldier was convicted and sentenced to death for a crime so grave that even his parents turned their backs on him, Lincoln stopped the execution, stating simply, "If he has no friend, I'll be his friend."

Lincoln, as a matter of fact, never cared much for the severe military discipline that demands the forfeit of a man's life for the exhibition of human weakness such as cowardice or desertion. "If," he demanded of a frowning Army officer, "God Almighty gives a man a cowardly pair of legs, how can he help their running away with him?"

A young soldier from a Vermont farm had fallen asleep while serving as a sentinel at an Army camp near Washington. The offense was serious because it was committed at a time when the safety of the Capital itself depended upon the watchful-

ness of the sentries. The Army brass determined to make an example of the youth. Every effort to save the boy's life had failed when the captain and the members of his company, all neighbors of the doomed offender, went to the White House to see Lincoln.

A few hours later, the boy was surprised to receive a visit from the President who gently asked him about his parents, their farm, his work, and his life generally. Lincoln then told him he was too good a boy to be shot for merely falling asleep. He himself had been brought up on a farm and knew how hard it must be for a country boy to keep awake nights, when new to Army habits and duties. The President promised the lad that he would free him, but at the same time felt he had to present a heavy bill for his services.

The youth's face lit up joyfully. He was sure his father would raise what money he could by mortgaging the family farm to pay the charges. Lincoln frowned. That would not be enough, he said. The boy alone could pay the bill, and only by proving himself to be as brave and faithful as any soldier of the Union.

Many of Lincoln's generals complained that the President was too softhearted and that his frequent pardons and reprieves impaired the discipline of the Union army. General Sherman, for example, claimed that President Lincoln was as tenderhearted as a girl, and admitted that he always sought to have an execution in his Army carried out before news of it could be brought to his commander in chief.

He had his civilian critics, too, and one of these was the Pennsylvania congressman Thaddeus Stevens, who on more than one occasion loudly denounced President Lincoln for being too free with his pardons. Congressman Stevens therefore was very much embarrassed when he walked into Lincoln's office one day, hat in hand, to ask for a pardon for a constituent's son who had been condemned to die for sleeping at his post. The doomed man's mother had made a special trip to Washington to enlist the congressman's support in a plea to the President for clemency, and Stevens knew that hundreds of his constituents were waiting to see how the old woman made out. He therefore

vigorously supported the woman's appeal to Lincoln. The President listened patiently for a while, then smiled wryly.

"Now, Thad, what would you do in this case if you happened to be President?"

Stephens replied that, knowing the circumstances of the case as he did, he would certainly grant the request. Lincoln quickly wrote out the pardon.

Despite the personal efforts of Lincoln, many thousands of court-martialed soldiers were executed during the Civil War. Because of continuing pressure from his generals not to interfere in their affairs, he did not go out of his way to look for men to pardon. The cases had to be brought to him. But once they were, he always proved to be softhearted. One of his cabinet members told a friend that when a man came to Lincoln with a sad story, the President's judgment was almost certain to be affected by it. Should the supplicant be a woman, her tears were sure to prevail.

Lincoln also displayed mercy toward captured Confederate soldiers, but in many cases Lincoln used clemency as a means of weakening their desire to fight. However, he did not always show mercy. None was shown to a Confederate bushwacker who had been accused of pouring gunpowder into the ears of his Unionist captives, then detonating the gunpowder to blow off their heads. And none was shown to a Virginia physician and "gentleman" who provoked an altercation with a Negro officer of the United States Cavalry on parade in Norfolk, shooting him dead.*

Mr. Lincoln had a drawer (called the President's Drawer) in a desk at the War Department in which copies of telegrams addressed to him and other departmental heads were filed. The President would come in at any time of the night or day, take a stack of communications from it, and begin from the top to read every one of them.

When he had reached the bottom of the stack of new tele-

* Richard N. Current, *The Lincoln Nobody Knows* (New York: The McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc).

grams and had begun on those that he had read before, he had a habit of saying, "Well, I guess I have got down to the raisins." Eventually an aide got around to asking him what the expression meant.

Lincoln replied, "I used to know a little girl out West who was inclined to eat too much. One day she ate a good many more raisins than she should have and followed them up with a quantity of other goodies. It made her very sick. After a time the raisins began to come. The girl gasped, looked at her mother, and said, 'Well, I will be better now, I guess, for I have got down to the raisins.'" *

The Union defeat at Fredericksburg had marked the fourth time the federal forces had been stymied in their march on the Confederate capital at Richmond. Burnside, who had commanded the Union forces in the fiasco, was transferred to another command and Hooker moved up to replace him.

Hooker waited until the following spring, then determined to take Richmond by marching up the Rappahannock River. With much larger forces at his command, he met Lee head-on at Chancellorsville, but was repulsed with heavy losses when the great "Stonewall" Jackson led a masterly attack on the flank of the Union army. Jackson was killed in the battle and this was to prove a boon to future Union fortunes. Undoubtedly the two most feared and respected commanders of the South were General Lee and General Thomas F. Jackson.

The tall, awkward Jackson had been a conscientious student of military strategy while at West Point, which he had entered at the age of eighteen years in 1842. A slow student, he stood seventieth in the class in which McClellan was first. In the field, Jackson proved to be a cunning, imaginative tactician, while McClellan played it stodgily, according to the "book." When the two met in the field, McClellan's firm of detectives (who served as his spies) probably were encouraged to overestimate the Confederate forces by Jackson himself, who paraded a dummy army,

* Ida M. Tarbell, *The Life of Abraham Lincoln*, Vol. II (New York: The Doubleday & McClure Co.).

sweepings of hospitals and garrisons, for the benefit of the detectives. On one occasion, Jackson's army was estimated at 115,000 men when actually its strength was 53,000.

Before his rise to prominence in the Civil War, Jackson's military career had proved to be singularly unspectacular. He served in a minor role in the Mexican campaign, then became a professor at the Virginia Military Institute at Lexington, Virginia, where his lectures were learned but dull. Neither an introvert nor gregarious, Jackson did not smoke, drink, or play cards. His religious convictions were so strong that he would not even open a letter on Sunday. He performed only adequately when cast in the role of a subordinate commander but proved his genius when allowed a free hand.

In 1862, Lincoln had proposed to Congress that they pay for the slaves and set them free. And by act of Congress the slaves in the District of Columbia were paid for and emancipated. But a majority in Congress felt that the nation could not afford to pay for all the slaves in the Confederate states, and indeed had no moral obligation to do so.

Perhaps because Lincoln believed that his primary duty was to preserve the Union, and not save or destroy slavery as an institution, he did not publicly pursue the subject. He did state that if he could save the Union without freeing any slaves he would, if by freeing all the slaves he could save the Union he would do that, or if by freeing only a portion of those enslaved he would do that.

Nevertheless, by midsummer 1862, Lincoln had prepared a draft of an emancipation proclamation freeing the nation's slaves. But he allowed Secretary Seward to talk him out of its immediate issuance. Seward told Lincoln that, while he personally approved of the document, he thought it best that it should be withheld until it could be released to the country supported by a major military success.

By this time Lee had marched his troops into Maryland and it seemed that, with the help of the Copperheads, he might be successful in invading the North. But at Antietam Lee's troops were repulsed and driven back. Seizing the opportunity, Lin-

coln proclaimed that if the people of the Confederacy did not lay down their arms by the first day of 1863 he would declare that all of their slaves should be forever free. With the South still at war on the first day of January, 1863, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation.

Union losses at Chancellorsville were heavy and the fortunes of war seemed to be favoring the rebels. Lee therefore assumed the offensive, and advanced through the Shenandoah Valley into Pennsylvania. There General Meade (later described by Grant as the right man in the right place at the right time) met and defeated Lee in a three-day battle at Gettysburg. The bloody engagement was featured by the repulse of a heroic charge by 15,000 troops under the command of General Pickett on the Union center. Confederate casualties at Gettysburg numbered from 20,000 to 30,000 men out of a total of 70,000. The Union loss was 23,000 of a total of 93,500 troops. To add to the catastrophic turn of events for the South, Union forces completed the capture of Vicksburg the following day.

After his victory at Gettysburg, General Meade proved to be too timid to press his advantage in an attempt to smash the retreating Confederate army. Lincoln implored the general not to let Lee escape. When Meade and his corps commanders refused to pursue the enemy, Lincoln blamed himself for not having taken the field in person in an effort to demolish the rebel army and thus hasten the end of the war.

Meade, on the other hand, was in a self-congratulatory mood and expressed his gratification that the retreating enemy was "no longer on our soil." When Lincoln was informed of this remark by the general, he shook his head sadly. "Why," he asked of an aide, "will not our generals get that notion out of their heads? All American soil is ours!"

In the fall of 1862 the Union General Rosecrans occupied Nashville. Bragg, his adversary, was at Chattanooga. In the battle of Murfreesboro, on December 31, 1862, Bragg withdrew, leaving the Union forces in possession of the field.

The Union fleet commanded by Admiral Farragut, who had previously forced the surrender of New Orleans, proved not

strong enough to reduce Vicksburg, sometimes called "the Gibraltar of the West." With the help of Sherman's troops, the forces of General Grant captured it after a seven-week siege. Then the fleet of Admiral Porter hemmed the Confederate leader Pemberton into a trap. Pemberton surrendered approximately 35,000 men plus a cache of 60,000 muskets and 175 guns. A few days later, Port Hudson, Louisiana, surrendered about 6,000 men and the Mississippi was free and the Confederacy split in two.

General Rosecrans, who had been inactive for several months while reorganizing his forces at Murfreesboro, once more assumed the offensive and tactically outmaneuvered Bragg, flanking him out of position after position, which terminated in the capture of Chattanooga.

About this time one of the few Union generals who had pursued right down the line a military policy that agreed with Lincoln's theory that to win the war the Union side, having the superior forces, must seek out the enemy, stand and fight, and, if possible, destroy him, was rewarded for his ability to follow this course. General Ulysses S. Grant was placed in top command of the Union armies of the West. His arrival was heralded by the Battle of Lookout Mountain (November 23-25, 1863), in which Union troops routed Confederate troops from seemingly impregnable positions.

Eventually, as a result of the improvement in Union fortunes in the West, Grant was made a lieutenant-general by act of Congress and placed in supreme command of all federalist troops in the field. He left his very able aide, General Sherman, in command of the Union armies in the West.

Grant's personal favorites among the Union generals were Sherman and Sheridan. His veneration of Sheridan's ability bordered on the fatuous. Many years after the conclusion of hostilities he told a senator that he believed "Sheridan had no superior as a general, either living or dead, and perhaps not an equal." Grant's obvious respect for Sheridan's capability caused that general to be promoted over the heads of two other sound, but less spectacular, generals, Meade and Thomas.

Sherman at first proceeded along orthodox lines, but in No-

vember, 1864, cut loose from his lines of communication and began a slashing drive to the sea. Laying waste the countryside on a sixty-mile front, he recaptured the city of Savannah on December 20, 1864. And when Admiral Farragut forced the surrender of Mobile, the following August, the termination of Confederate power in the Far South appeared to be at hand. Sherman rested in Savannah for a few weeks, then began his drive to the north. Johnston, with a vastly inferior number of troops, contented himself with harassing the lines of the Union troops, but evaded a showdown assault. "Fight, fight! Why don't you fight?" implored Jefferson Davis. Johnston, knowing the odds against his survival, would have none of it. Sherman captured Raleigh on April 13, 1865, and thirteen days later the surrender of Johnston's troops made the campaign complete.

Leaving Sherman to his own devices, Grant assumed personal control of the fight against Lee's armies, which were then headquartered in Virginia. Disdaining military finesse, Grant pursued Lee incautiously into a densely wooded country called "the Wilderness," scene of a previous Union disaster. Near Chancellorsville, Lee allowed Grant to fall upon him, with a resultant fearful loss in Union troops at a place called Cold Harbor. Grant's troops sustained in a half hour's fighting casualties in killed and wounded amounting to 10,000 men.

Grant thereupon switched his strategy, Petersburg becoming his immediate objective, with Richmond to be conquered by an assault from the southeast. He sent Sheridan's cavalry scurrying through the Shenandoah Valley to lay waste the valley and thus cut off the supplies of the Confederate armies opposing him. Sheridan did his job so thoroughly that one observer remarked, "If a crow flies down this valley, he will have to take his provisions with him."

Sheridan then decimated the Confederate troops under General Early after a stubborn fight, and the siege of Petersburg was begun. The siege continued throughout the winter months, and in February, 1865, following a decisive defeat of the rebels at Five Forks, Grant seized Petersburg.

Lee, with his supply trains diverted by a mistake and his

army exhausted by fatigue and malnutrition, surrendered on April 9, 1865, at Appomattox. With Lee's surrender, to all intents and purposes, the war was over. For within a matter of six weeks, Confederate Generals Johnston, Taylor, and Smith had surrendered the last remnants of the rebel army, and history's bloodiest war was at an end.

CHAPTER IX

AFTERMATH

THE BIVOUC OF THE DEAD

The muffled drum's sad roll has beat
The soldier's last tattoo;
No more in Life's parade shall meet
That brave and fallen few.
On Fame's eternal camping-ground
Their silent tents are spread,
And Glory guards, with solemn round,
The bivouac of the dead.

No rumor of the foe's advance
Now swells upon the wind,
No troubled thought at midnight haunts
Of loved ones left behind;
No vision of the morrow's strife
The warrior's dream alarms;
No braying horns nor screaming fife
At dawn shall call to arms.

Rest on, embalmed and sainted dead!
Dear as the blood ye gave;
No impious footstep here shall tread
The herbage of your grave;
Nor shall your glory be forgot
While Fame her record keeps,
Or Honor points the hallowed spot
Where Valor proudly sleeps.

—THEODORE O'HARA

IN LINKING ITS WAY of life to the reprehensible institution of human slavery, the South inevitably drew unto itself the adverse

judgment of history. But if the South's cause was ignoble to a degree, there was nothing ignoble about the courage and valor displayed by its soldiers on the battlefield.

Until World War I the American Civil War ranked as the greatest blood bath in the history of the civilized world. Of the 2,100,000 Union troops, total casualties amounted to 350,000 (67,000 killed in battle; 43,000 died of wounds; 200,000 died of disease; and 40,000 more died of all other causes). Of the 1,000,000 Confederate troops, the loss in killed and wounded approximated 150,000. An almost identical number of Union and Confederate troops (50,156 Union and 30,152 Confederate) died while prisoners of war.

As in every war, there were charges and countercharges of cruel and bestial behavior on both sides. Sherman's famous march to the sea, devastating everything in his path, especially aroused the people of the South. But at Andersonville, Georgia, for example, the South itself operated a military prison that was notorious for filth, disease, and barbarous treatment of the Blue prisoners of war. Between February 15, 1864 and April, 1865, this prison received 50,000 prisoners, 13,000 of whom were to die of various diseases and be buried in long trenches. The prisoners were confined to a tract of twenty-two acres, without shelter from sun and frost, and under the most filthy, unsanitary conditions. After the close of the war, the prison superintendent was court-martialed and hanged for causing the needless deaths of thousands of prisoners.

Then, in August, 1863, an outlaw band of Confederates who had been sent to their homes following the fall of Vicksburg reorganized under the command of Quantrelle. On August 21, they launched a surprise raid on Lawrence, Kansas, and proceeded to pillage the town. Nearly 200 inhabitants were massacred, but only a handful of the raiders were eventually captured.

On April 12, 1864, a fortress called Fort Pillow, located near Memphis, Tennessee, was attacked by a large force of rebels headed by General Nathan Forrest, reputedly a Ku Klux Klan leader. After a brief battle, the Union garrison, comprised of

about 275 Negroes and 280 whites, fled. The rebels gave chase, refused to accept surrenders, and wiped out the entire Union force. President Lincoln was convinced that there had been another massacre, but professed to believe that General Forrest himself had not been responsible.

From the battlefield of Bull Run a correspondent for the New York *Herald* (with fingers crossed behind his back, we hope) reported to his paper and its credulous readers that "the barbarities practiced by the rebels at the battle . . . were unparalleled." He related how a Northern private had found a wounded Southerner lying in the sun and had carried him to the shade, "where he gently layed him down and gave him a drink from his canteen. Revived by the drink, the ingrate drew his pistol and shot his benefactor through the heart." "Rebel" cannoneers, he said, had deliberately trained their guns on groups of wounded men, and "rebel fiends in human shape" had taken "the bayonets and knives of our wounded and dying soldiers and thrust them into their hearts and left them sticking there." Others had severed the heads of the dead and had amused themselves by "kicking them about as footballs." The bodies of Union officers had been "literally cut to pieces," and prisoners had "been pinioned to trees and tortured by bayonets thrust at them."*

But if the Civil War had its shocking instances of cruelty and inhumanity, for Lincoln it also had its moments of humor. At the outbreak of the war, Lincoln, besieged by office seekers, complained to an aide: "I feel like a man letting lodgings at one end of the house while the other end is on fire."

Throughout the war, Lincoln had his troubles with visiting clergymen who plied him with unasked-for advice on how to conduct the war. After one such visit, Lincoln was overheard querulously complaining to a confidant that he couldn't see why, if God wanted to send him a message, it had to come through them.

* Avery Craven, *The Coming of the Civil War* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press).

And there was the time when a Mr. Shrigley, a Philadelphia Universalist, had been nominated for hospital chaplain. A protesting delegation went to Washington to see President Lincoln.

Said the spokesman for the group: "We have called, Mr. President, to confer with you in regard to the appointment of Mr. Shrigley."

"Oh, yes," Lincoln responded cordially. "I have sent his name to the Senate and he will no doubt be confirmed at an early date."

"But," protested one of the delegates, "we have not come to ask for the appointment, but to solicit you to withdraw the nomination."

"On what grounds?" asked the President.

"He is not sound in his theological opinions. He does not believe in endless punishment. Not only that but he believes that even the rebels themselves will be finally saved."

"Is that so? My, my," tutted the President. He sat silent for a moment, lost in deep thought. Then he brightened.

"Well, gentlemen, if that be so and there is any way under Heaven whereby the rebels can be saved, then for God's sake and their sakes, let the man be appointed."

Mr. Shrigley was appointed.

At another stage of the war, the President was asked to review the first corps of the Army, commanded by General Reynolds. The ceremony was to be held on a beautiful plain north of Potomac Creek. To get there the Presidential party rode in an ambulance drawn by a wild team of six mules. The road was very rough, and as the ambulance jolted along, the driver, who sat well up in front, occasionally let fly a volley of oaths directed at his mule team.

Lincoln grew restive as the oaths became more frequent. Finally he leaned forward and gently touched the driver on the shoulder.

"Excuse me, my friend," he said, "are you an Episcopalian?" Startled, the driver looked around.

"No, Mr. President, I'm a Methodist."

"Well, well," said Lincoln, "I thought you must be an Episco-

palian. You swear just like Governor Seward, who is a churchwarden."

Lincoln was asked what he would do with Jefferson Davis, his Confederate counterpart, if Union troops were so fortunate as to capture him. Would Lincoln send him before a firing squad for his treason? Lincoln shook his head from side to side. Would he have Davis hanged? the questioner persisted. Again Lincoln shook his head. But what if one of Davis's captors "accidentally" tripped over a rock and discharged his rifle, killing Davis?

At this, the expression on Lincoln's face grew more cheerful. It put him in mind, he said, of a cold and stormy winter's night in his early boyhood days, when a temperance speaker had stayed at his family's cabin overnight. The man had been quite chilled when he reached their home after the meeting. He said if they would give him a hot lemonade he thought it would prevent his taking cold.

Lincoln's father had suggested that some whiskey added to the lemonade would be very beneficial. The temperance man hesitated, wrestling with his conscience.

"Well," he said finally, "you might put some in unbeknownst to me."

But Lincoln's own favorite story concerned two female Quakers who were comparing him with Jefferson Davis.

"I think Jefferson will win the war," said the first woman.

"Why does thee think so?" asked the other.

"Jefferson is a praying man."

"And so is Abraham!" retorted the other.

"Yes, that is true," acknowledged the first Quaker, "but the Lord will think Abraham is joking."

A foreign diplomat who called on the President at the White House during the war surprised the President blacking his own shoes.

"What, Mr. President," he asked, "do you black your own shoes?"

"Yes," replied Lincoln. "Whose shoes do you black?"

The supreme idiocy of human warfare is that it very seldom accomplishes anything of a lasting nature. Strangers having no

personal quarrel seek to kill each other at the behest of their failing diplomats, who obscure their own mistakes by nationwide exercises in flag waving and an appeal to patriotism, which Doctor Samuel Johnson called "the last refuge of a scoundrel." But this is not always true. The importance of the Civil War was immense, as it settled once and for all the momentous questions of secession and slavery. It won for our nation and our democratic form of government increased prestige abroad. But it did not secure for the Negro complete equality in a free society; and it left a bitter legacy of hatred between conqueror and conquered that would remain for several generations.

Lacking a great war President it seems fair to say that the Union could have lost the war. Confederate troops fought with great valor and, during the early war years, with far greater skill than the Union troops. But valor was to be found in equal measure on the Union side. The Northern troops fought desperately, although their blood flowed freely, handicapped as they were by incompetent leadership.

General Grant was often criticized for his bibulousness. But Lincoln, tired of the incessant criticism of one of his favorites, was once heard to remark: "Well, I wish you would tell me the brand of whiskey that Grant drinks. I would like to send a barrel of it to every one of my generals." The general's reputation for heavy drinking nevertheless was well earned, and he actually, once on the western plains before the war, got so drunk that he did his "business" into a fellow officer's mess pan.

Both sides were faced with tremendous problems not always of a military nature. One of the sharpest thorns in the side of the Confederacy was its lack of a stable currency. The Confederate treasury remained on a paper basis throughout the war and issued no metal coins. The rebel government issued paper notes that contained on their face a promise of redemption six months after the establishment of peace. For a few months the paper money remained at a par exchange value, then began to diminish in worth. By 1864, the Confederate dollar was worth only five cents, and in January, 1865, only two cents. This gave

rise later to the popular expression of something being "not worth two cents."

Perhaps the greatest achievement of the Lincoln administration was wrung from Lincoln—by his very nature ever a moderate man—by the pressing urgency of the war's conduct. To bolster the morale of the Union forces by turning the war into a crusade against the slavery evil, the President announced late in September, 1862, that on January 1, 1863, all slaves living in states still engaged in rebellion should be free. On that New Year's Day he made good his pledge by issuing the Emancipation Proclamation. The provisions of this document were later implemented by the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, and the degrading practice of human bondage in this country was officially at an end.

The year 1863 marked the turning point of the Civil War, and a permanent upswing in Union fortunes. In July, Grant's capture of Vicksburg restored full control of the Mississippi River to the Union side. Meade's defeat of Lee at Gettysburg brought to naught the hope of the South to transfer the war's battlegrounds to the states north of the Potomac.

In March of the following year, Grant, called to the command of the Union army, began his harassment of Confederate forces, which ultimately was to obtain the victory.

In June, 1864, Lincoln was unanimously nominated by his party for a second Presidential term. The Democratic Party nominated General McClellan, and promptly labeled the war a failure. However, the improving fortunes of the war allowed Lincoln, in November, to squeak through to re-election with a popular vote margin of 400,000 (Lincoln, 2,216,000; McClellan, 1,800,000). Our idiot Electoral College count gave Lincoln a spread of 212 votes to 12.

When Lincoln's victory over McClellan at the polls had been assured, he was greeted at the White House by a group of serenaders. While he appeared to be quietly grateful for the vote of confidence given him by the people, his personal joy in the victory appeared quite restrained. When asked why, he said

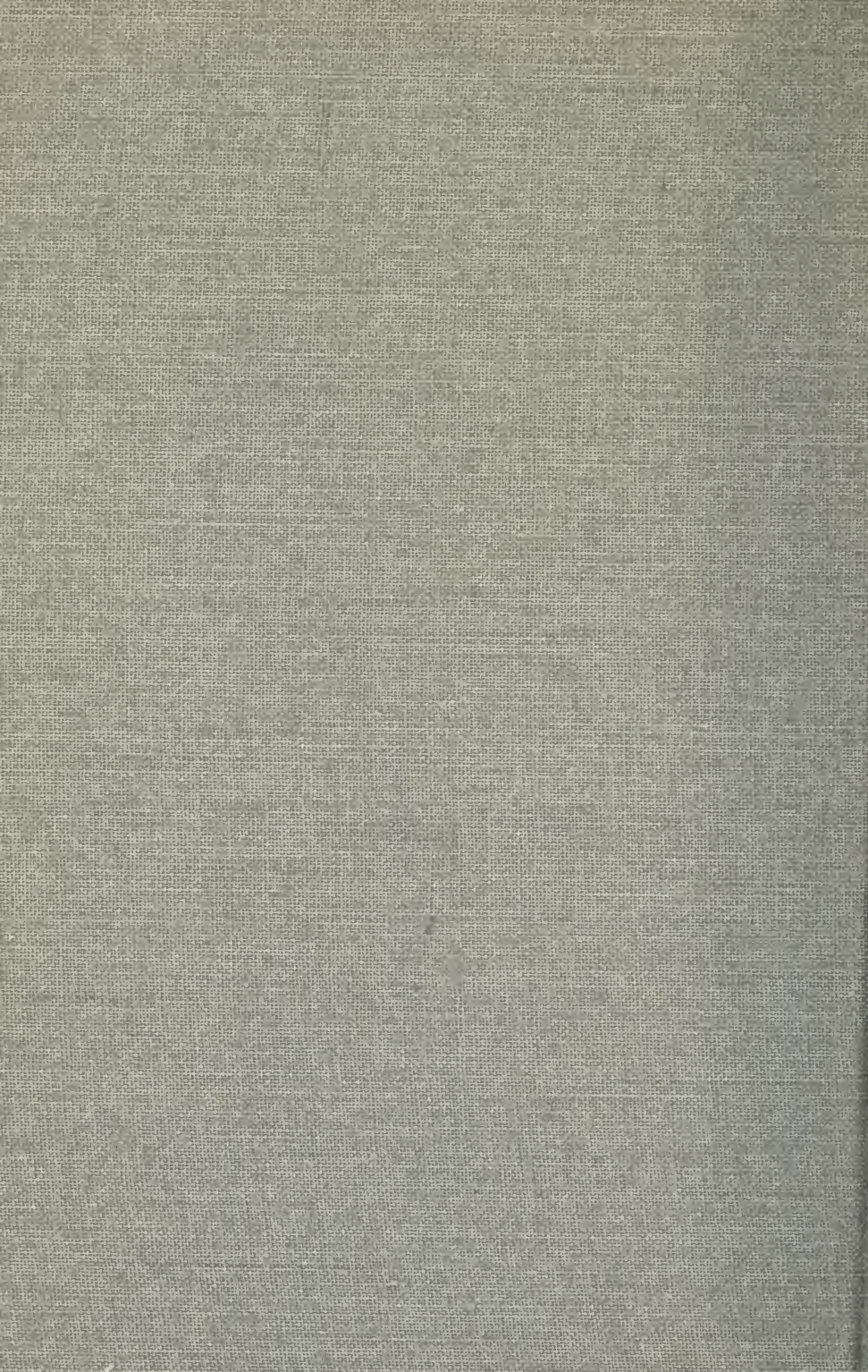
simply, "It is no pleasure to me to triumph over anyone."

The war was rapidly drawing to a close, but Lincoln was never to see the dawn of complete peace. On the night of Good Friday, April 14, 1865, with complete surrender of the South about to be achieved through the capitulation of the armies under General Johnston, whom even then the brilliant, ruthless Sherman was stalking, he attended a Washington theater party in company with Mrs. Lincoln. Halfway through the play, at a time no one then present could afterward exactly remember, two shots rang out, and horrified theater-goers saw the great President pitch convulsively forward over the railing of his box.

Lincoln lingered through the night of Good Friday, but slipped away the following morning at 7:22. Stanton, keeping a death watch at the side of his stricken chief, was the first to note his passing, with the words, "Now he belongs to the ages."

At a later date, as the body of our greatest President was lowered into the grave, the Second Inaugural Address was read in final farewell. Any other tribute would have seemed somehow inappropriate, for truly it was he who "with malice toward none; with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God [gave him] to see the right, [he had striven] on to finish the work [he was] in."

Due to the assassin's bullet, Lincoln's work was never finished. The problems of reconstruction in the South were never to be fully solved by his successors. Lacking a firm hand at the nation's helm, the South was able to win at least a share of the peace and to retrieve in part a way of life that left one eighth of the citizenry of the United States in a permanently inferior status. Thus leaving for succeeding generations the bitter legacy of a house still divided.



(continued from front flap)

President's life to add to their stockpile of anecdotes. The casual reader, on the other hand, will enjoy reading this keenly perceptive chronicle of the rise of America's greatest champion of civil rights. The book is indeed a gem well worth adding to the nation's jewel box of Lincoln literature.

About the Author

HARVEY HOLMAN is a graduate of Augsburg College in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where he majored in political science and history. An avid fan of the Civil War era, Mr. Holman has a certain kinship with Lincoln in that he too has run for local elective offices in Minneapolis. During his two campaigns he had the backing of the Democratic-Farmer-Laborer (DFL) Organization. A veteran of World War II and a one-time semi-professional baseball pitcher, Mr. Holman is employed today as law-enforcement inspector for the State of Minnesota Department of Public Welfare.

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